- **News / A2**

Susan Roces takes over election protest from FPJ

- **Business / B1**

CAP eyes buyout of planholders

- **Lifestyle / C1**

Memo to RP movies: Back to basics, please

- **World / A8**

Palestinians choose Arafat successor

- **Across / A17**

'Praningococcemia' irks Baguio folk

Scientists say Earth still 'ringing like bell'

I FEEL THE EARTH MOVE UNDER MY SKIN...

SYDNEY—Much of the earth was still "ringing like a bell" two weeks after the Dec. 26 earthquake that unleashed devastating tsunamis around the Indian Ocean, Australian scientists said yesterday.

SCIENTISTS/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Monday, January 10, 2005 / ★★ / 56 pages / 4 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 33 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Pinoy's tsunami weblog spawns giga-queries

By Joey G. Alarilla
Inq7.net

IT WAS while vacationing in Amsterdam that Benjamin Agravante Jr., a 25-year-old native of Legazpi City, Albay, saw the first CNN reports on the magnitude-9 earthquake that struck several Asian countries on Dec. 26.

PINOY'S/ A4

Faith proves stronger than fear in Quiapo

PNP officials doubt bomb plot

By Tarra V. Quismundo
and Christian V. Esguerra

NOT EVEN police claims about a supposed Islamic bomb plot could hold back the massive human tide.

Crowds estimated by officials at half a million—the biggest in years—pushed and jostled and surged around the centuries-old, life-sized statue of Jesus Christ yesterday to mark the feast of the Black Nazarene.

They included wobbly toddlers and agile teens, muscled men and aging women, all clamoring to touch or at least see the miraculous image brought over from Mexico by Spanish colonizers in 1606.

Many in the crowd came barefoot, including Vice President Noli de Castro, known to have been a Nazareno devotee since his days as a broadcaster. He came with his pants rolled midway up his legs.

Protected by police, De Castro joined the tumultuous procession, witnesses said.

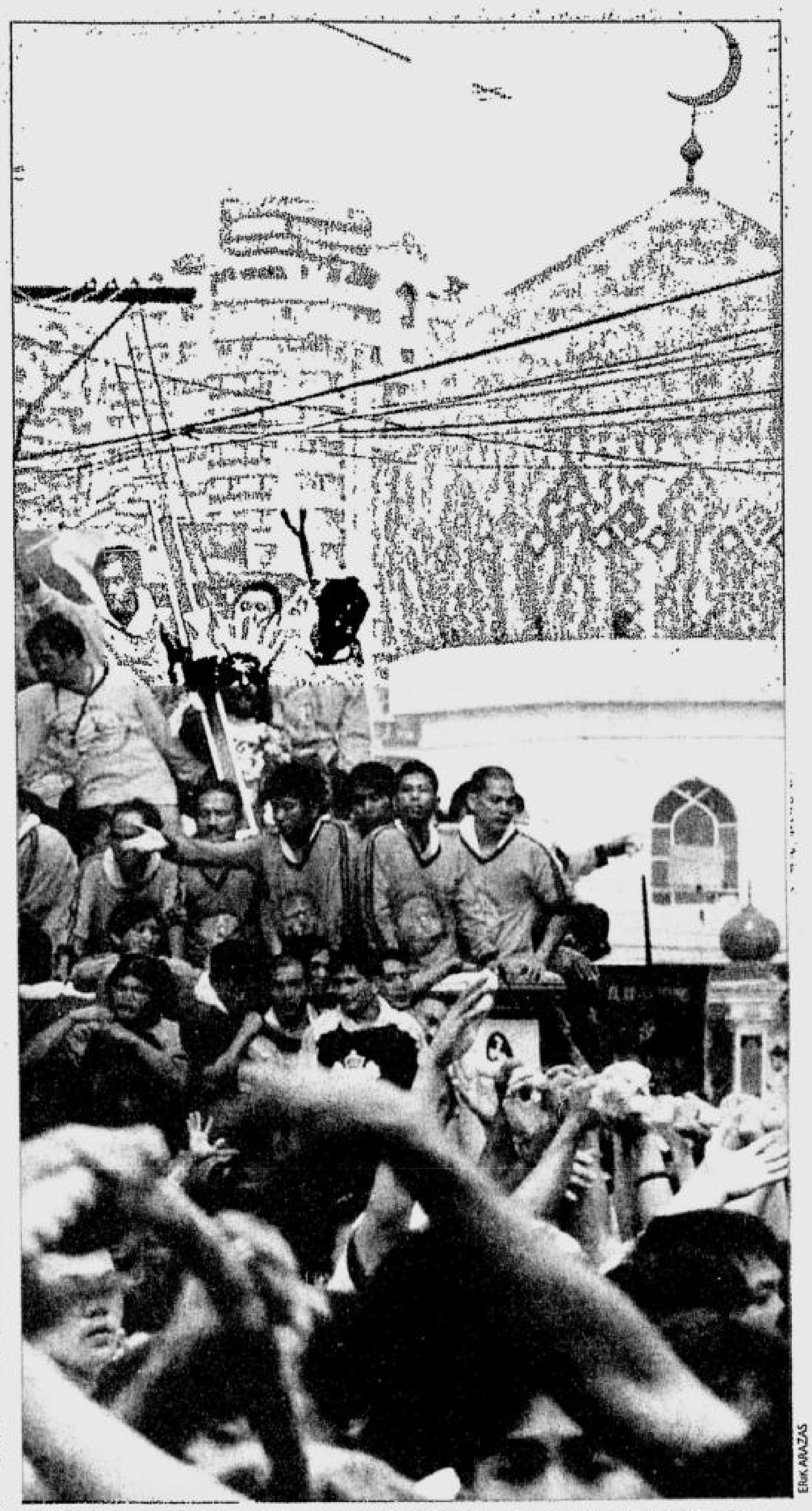
More than 2,000 policemen and 15 ambulances were deployed along the route of the procession around Quiapo district.

"It's the biggest crowd we've ever had," said Julius Christopher Cuyos, operations officer of Quiapo Church.

The human sea outmatched the 200,000 faithful who attended the religious procession last year and in 2003, and the 300,000 who came in 2000.

Was faith stronger, more powerful than fear?

FAITH/ A6


ERIK ARAZAS

DEVOTEES keep the faith amid a reported bomb threat by Islamic militants as they escort the miraculous Black Nazarene as it makes its way in front of the Quiapo Mosque in yesterday's ritual celebrating the Manila district's fiesta.

Devastation traced to lost mangroves

UNAWATUNA, Sri Lanka—From huge chunks of coral flung up hillsides to broken shacks, cars and other wreckage lying in watery offshore graves, the scale of the tsunami's environmental damage is evident along huge swathes of Asian coastline.

Experts say the extent of devastation caused by the giant waves has laid bare some stark realities—the plight of poor fishing folk forced to live on the fringe to earn a living, man's folly at clearing natural coastal habitats to chase the tourism dollar, and a modern ignorance of the power of the sea.

All assistant dive instructor Ranjit Sirinaga, 38, in this popular Sri Lankan resort knows is that his livelihood and beloved reefs could be gone forever.

"There was a lot of coral out there, and many colorful

DEVASTATION/ A20

Tsunami donors give, but they also take back

BANGKOK—As aid rushes in to Asia's tsunami survivors, makers of essentials, such as biscuits and medicine, are cranking up production, ensuring part of the billions of dollars pledged to help victims will stay in the coffers of rich donor countries.

Aid agencies say they need to feed 2 million people and shelter up to 5 million whose lives were wrecked by the tsunami on Dec. 26 that has killed more than 156,000 people and led governments and agencies to pledge more than $5 billion in aid.

Agencies are scrambling to get special food and drinking water to Indonesia's remote Aceh province, far-flung islands in the Maldives and Sri Lanka's battered east coast, and are grateful for any company that can deliver within hours.

"Obviously, high-protein biscuits are humanitarian; you don't have them with your cup of tea," said Sandie Blanchet, a spokesperson for the UN children's agency Unicef in Denmark.

"There is such a thing as a humanitarian business, but it's good because these companies are used to emergencies."

Nutriset, a French company, is completely geared toward disasters. It called staff back from holiday to boost

TSUNAMI/ A20

Ancient justice system effective in 2 towns

By Volt Contreras

BARIRA, Maguindanao—Lawyers can't make a killing here.

Officials in this once rebel-infested town and their counterparts in nearby North Upi are eager to see roads, schools, and power and communication lines built in their remote villages. But they are in no rush to implement "modern laws."

Over the past three years, both towns have shown how ancient ways of resolving conflicts and of dispensing justice can be revived to help keep the peace.

Barira has formed a council of elders and *ulama* (Islamic religious scholars), while North Upi has created an arbitration body composed of Muslims, Christians and indigenous people.

Land disputes, offenses against women, cattle rustling, and even homicides caused by road accidents, are some of the cases brought before these panels for resolution. Only graver offenses, such as rape and murder, and cases in which the feuding parties can't reach a settlement get turned over to the police and regular courts.

In Barira, for example, a Muslim woman can file a complaint before the council of elders if she feels she was sexually harassed.

If the offender's guilt is established, the damages due her follow this scheme: P3,000 if the lascivious tease was verbal; P6,000 if there was physical contact, and P12,000 if the contact

ANCIENT/ A20

DELFIN T. MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A CROWD brings tension—and tears—to the 500-kg leatherback turtle in Agdangan, Quezon.

Quezon folk free rare marine turtle

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

AGDANGAN, Quezon—When four fishermen found themselves having a hard time pulling in their net early Friday morning in Tayabas Bay off the coast of this town, they reckoned that they had caught the big one.

"We thought that we hit the jackpot, probably a big fish or a group of fish, because it was really hard pulling back the net," recounted Jomar Redebeso. Then, the big head of a sea turtle popped up from under the water.

The four realized that a leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), locally known as "*binalimbing*," had gotten entangled in the net. It weighed more than 400 kilograms.

Before noon yesterday, at least three fishing boats loaded with town, environment and fishery officials and reporters went out to sea and released the turtle a kilometer from the shore.

Redebeso said that after accidentally catching the sea creature, it took him and his companions more than three hours to sail back to Barangay Kanlurang Kalutan. "It took us that long because we were careful not to injure the turtle," he said.

QUEZON/ A6

Book helps heal spirit of survivors

By Ma. Ceres Doyo

"WHEN I first interviewed Joel, he admitted to being afraid of the rain. He believed that every strong rain would bring on another mudslide. I introduced the draw-a-person-in-the-rain as a therapeutic intervention, which seemed appropriate at the time because of the nature of his fears. I was surprised by his first drawing in the series, because he portrayed a young boy with adequate coping skills and no fear of the rain … I continued to probe. What resulted was a series of drawings that ran like a storybook. Through drawing and the story he created, he succeeded in breaking through his denials and managed to resolve his fears."

This is an excerpt from a field psychologist's narrative about her therapy session with a boy who survived the 1990 earthquake and mudslides in Nueva Ecija.

Post-disaster relief and rehabilitation should go beyond the material and economic. Survivors need healing, not just of their

BOOK/ A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon and the whole of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/10/05

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FrontPage

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Susan subs for FPJ in poll case

By Carlito Pablo

FPJ's political ghost lives.

The death of movie star and opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. has not stymied the opposition's pursuit of the electoral protest he filed against President Macapagal-Arroyo, whom he believed robbed him of victory in the last presidential elections.

Although Poe didn't live long enough to see his protest come to fruition, his cause will be kept alive by his widow Susan Roces.

At 10 this morning, Poe's lawyers and allies will file before the Supreme Court sitting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal a formal notice of the opposition leader's death simultaneous with a motion substituting Roces for Poe.

"Ms Susan Roces has signed the substitution papers," Poe's campaign spokesperson and House Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) confirmed in a phone interview.

Escudero stressed that Roces will be substituting for Poe "only in so far as the interest of knowing the truth which is who really won the May 10 presidential elections."

"She has no ambition to sit as president and she knows that she will not sit as president even if FPJ's protest is upheld by the Supreme Court," Escudero said.

"Ms Susan Roces will be substituting on behalf of the Filipino people whose will was subverted in the last elections," Escudero added.

In a separate phone interview, Poe's lead counsel Sixto Brillantes Jr. said that Roces was the "most logical person to substitute for the late Mr. Poe and the Filipino people."

ROCES

"She will be principally the substitute of the Filipino electorate," Brillantes said.

But Brillantes claimed that as of 5 p.m. yesterday, he had yet to receive word from Roces about her agreement to substitute for her late husband in his protest.

He said that should Roces decline, Poe's running mate, former Sen. Loren Legarda, had agreed to fill in.

Legarda earlier filed a vice presidential electoral protest against President Macapagal-Arroyo's running mate and now Vice President Noli de Castro.

Escudero and Brillantes separately explained that the constitutional process of succession will come into operation should Poe be declared by the Supreme Court as the winner of the May 10, 2004, presidential elections.

In the event the high tribunal upholds Poe's protest, two scenarios would emerge.

In the first where Legarda wins her protest against De Castro, Legarda automatically becomes the President. As President, Legarda will appoint the new Vice President from among the senators.

But in the second scenario where Legarda loses her vice presidential electoral protest, De Castro automatically assumes the presidency. He gets to choose from among the senators who will be the new Vice President.

Brillantes said that he expects a ruling on Poe's protest within three years "at most."

Brillantes, Escudero and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay are scheduled to go to the Supreme Court in Manila this morning to file the notice of Poe's death and Roces' substitution in the case.

Poe died of a cerebral stroke on Dec. 14, 2004, at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City.

Brillantes explained that under SC rules, a formal notice of death and substitution must be filed 30 days after the death of a presidential or vice presidential candidate who filed a protest.

"Mr. Poe died on Dec. 14 so it must be done on or before Jan. 13," Brillantes said.

Poe and Legarda filed their respective electoral protests before the high court last July 23.

The two accused the Arroyo camp of "massive and widespread electoral fraud and anomalies."

Poe and Legarda claimed that they won over their respective rivals by at least 1.1 million votes.

They also charged that the polls were marred by massive irregularities in 124,404 electoral precincts nationwide.

Poe's supporters led by actor Rez Cortez recently initiated a signature-gathering campaign to convince Roces to enter politics.

Following her husband's death, Roces has been acknowledged as the "inspiration of the opposition."

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Tax bills on tap as Congress reopens today

By Christine O. Avendaño

CONGRESS resumes its regular session today with the expectation that it would ratify the lateral attrition bill.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said yesterday the bicameral conference committee that would reconcile the Senate and House versions of the lateral attrition bill would meet at noon today and Congress could ratify the reconciled bill soon after.

The bill that seeks to provide a system of rewards and penalties for government employees involved in revenue collection is up for reconciliation in both chambers after the Senate passed the measure during the special session called by President Macapagal-Arroyo last week.

The House approved the measure last month just before Congress went on recess for the holidays on Dec. 17.

With the resumption of the session, Drilon said the Senate would focus on the other tax reform measures that President Arroyo had deemed necessary to generate much-needed revenues for the government.

In a phone interview, he said the Senate ways and means committee chaired by Sen. Ralph Recto would finish public hearings on the proposals to increase the value-added tax rate as well as to lift VAT exemptions.

Drilon said that Recto had suggested that the VAT bill be consolidated with the other tax reform measure that aims to rationalize fiscal incentives.

This is because the proposal to rationalize fiscal incentives will also involve the removal of certain VAT exemptions, he said.

"I support this position," Drilon added.

The House, where tax measures emanate, had approved at the committee level the proposal calling for a two-percent across-the-board increase in the VAT and the amendments to the proposed Rationalization of Fiscal Incentives Act.

As for the tax amnesty bill which the Senate ways and means committee had taken up, Drilon considered the measure to be "dead in the water."

He said Recto's ways and means committee and some other senators were not predisposed to take it up.

"We're not inclined to reward tax cheats," Drilon said.

Drilon said the Senate was expected as well to wind up this week the subcommittee hearings on the proposed 2005 national budget being heard by the Senate finance committee chaired by Sen. Manuel Villar.

Drilon said it was likely that the Senate would start deliberating the budget bill on the floor by the end of the month.

Gov't wants Piatco judge out of case

SOLICITOR General Alfredo Benipayo has asked the Pasay City judge handling the government's expropriation of Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport to inhibit himself from the case.

In a motion filed on Friday, Benipayo said Pasay Regional Trial Court Judge Henrick Gingoyon had "prejudged" the case, particularly on the issue of just compensation to be paid the terminal's builder, Philippine Air Terminals Co. (Piatco).

"The judge has obviously prejudged the instant case, especially the contentious issue of the amount and basis of just compensation," Benipayo said.

Gingoyon last Tuesday ordered the government to make an initial payment of $62.34 million to Piatco for the terminal.

Benipayo said the order was "irregular," noting that Piatco had not asked the court to order the release of the money that was deposited in the Land Bank of the Philippines.

He said the money should have been released only after the court had determined just compensation and after the government was able to thoroughly inspect the terminal.

"For one, (the government was) shocked to learn that a summon could not be served on defendant Piatco at their given address, yet for purposes of the hostile order, Piatco was able to be reached," Benipayo said.

Benipayo earlier said the judge should have not come out with the ruling since there were competing claims for compensation. He said that Piatco partner, Fraport AG, was demanding $425 million plus damages, while contractor Takenaka Corp. was asking for $70 million.

Benipayo also challenged the court's order prohibiting the government from "performing acts of ownership" like awarding concessions, adding that the court had issued a writ of possession.

"The issuance of the writ of possession already entitles plaintiffs to perform all acts necessary to achieve the public purpose for which the expropriation was instituted," he said. *Philip C. Tubeza and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Owwa sets deadline for tsunami inquiries

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE OVERSEAS Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) said relatives of the Asian tsunami victims with Filipino-sounding names have three weeks to inquire about their kin before the Owwa shelves the records.

Owwa operations center head duty officer Mustafa Glang said three weeks is a reasonable time to expect people with missing relatives in Thailand and Indonesia, which were hardest hit by the tsunami, to look for these missing persons.

"If three weeks from now, there is still nobody who claims them, then these missing people may not be ours," Glang told the INQUIRER in a recent interview.

Based on the latest list of the Department of Foreign Affairs, 12 Filipinos remain missing in Thailand while 16 fatalities with Filipino-sounding names have not been confirmed to be Filipinos.

Those still missing were identified as Marcela S. Albao, Jasmin C. Barandoc, Gloria Pongco Bauerle, Cruzett Bulaon Cruz, Remedios Rico Daniel, Michael Galang, Rocillene Ginoo, Alexander Latoza, Ariel Mallari, Renato Naval, Gerard S. Reyes and Edna Atienza Suess.

Glang said only one family, that of 23-year-old Roma Cathryn Llorente, had come forward to check if the "Katrin Llorente" in the list of fatalities with Filipino-sounding names was their relative.

No one else has checked with the Owwa concerning other fatalities with Filipino-sounding names.

Glang, a veteran welfare officer, said families with missing relatives usually did not wait too long to check with authorities on the status of their loved ones.

"We will keep the records until there are no more inquiries. We're still waiting for information and updates from Thailand. Otherwise, we will have to shelve the records," Glang said.

The Owwa operations center, which daily updates its list based on information from the DFA, has received fewer and fewer queries on tsunami victims.

The center used to receive 300 personal and phone queries on overseas Filipino workers in the tsunami-hit areas.

Five Filipinos were confirmed dead in Thailand while 27 survivors have been repatriated. Another 29 chose to remain in Thailand to work, the DFA said.

Solon for tagging 'risk areas'

By Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo

AN ADMINISTRATION lawmaker yesterday pushed for the nationwide identification of "risk areas" vulnerable to natural calamities in order to better protect the people from disaster.

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur), co-chair of the Commission on Appointments, said the government authorities concerned would then be able to put in place proactive measures to lessen the loss to lives and property during calamities.

"While the government cannot outlaw strong rains which trigger floods and landslides, what it can do is identify areas at risk," Pichay said.

The identification of these areas and the adoption of a national emergency and disaster readiness plan is embodied in House Bill No. 3472 which Pichay has filed.

The bill calls for the creation of a Philippine Emergency and Disaster Management Authority to replace the National Disaster Coordinating Council.

In the bill, Pichay noted that about 60 percent of the world's major natural disasters occur in the Asia-Pacific region, making the Philippines perennially vulnerable to calamities.

Pichay said the Brussels-based Center for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters cited the Philippines as having the highest natural disaster occurrences in the world in a span of 90 years from 1900 to 1990.

"There is a need to de-fragment the emergency and disaster management structure in the country and consolidate it into a new and independent authority," Pichay said in his bill.

Pichay pointed that emergency and disaster management measures currently in place were "short-term and reactive in nature."

"What we truly need is a measure with substantial and long-lasting results. One salient way to bring this about is through a comprehensive and centralized emergency authority," he said.

Pichay said the PEDMA shall be under the Office of the President and composed of considered experts in the field of emergency and disaster management.

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Pinoy's tsunami weblog spawns giga-queries

From page A1

Like most people, he was horrified and decided to do something about it.

Overnight, Agravante, a graphic designer, set up a weblog which started posting and sharing news on the earthquake and the giant waves it had spawned. The site quickly evolved into a comprehensive online directory of people who are still missing in the tsunami-struck areas.

"I checked the Internet immediately for information on the earthquake and found very few articles. At that time, everybody was more concerned about the earthquake than the tsunami," Agravante told the INQUIRER via e-mail, recalling his initial reaction to the news.

"Almost instantly, the idea just sparked: Why not make a blog site and spread the news? So there I was, in a cold, old Dutch apartment in Amsterdam, with the TV behind me and a laptop in front, push-publishing breaking news across the Southeast Asian region," he narrated.

"Being one of the first to do this, my site topped the Google search within hours, and my URL was plastered on countless Web forums. After only 24 hours, my site received more than 80,000 hits and consumed CD-size bandwidth."

His Sneak News site at www.sneaknews.com continues to attract more visitors and has become a one-man, full-time project.

One reason he put up the site was because he was so grateful the Philippines was spared from the killer tsunamis.

"I was stunned," Agravante said, when asked how he felt when he first learned of the tsunamis.

"When my parents were still alive, they told us about the possibility of a tsunami crashing on our city. Our house [in Legazpi] is on the beach front. We even had drills, which was more or less running like hell with the family photo albums to the nearby hills. I am so thankful our country was spared," he said, adding:

"If I were a millionaire, I would give my millions to tsunami charities but since I can't even complete my Umberto Eco first editions, I content myself with helping the best way I can."

Helping people

Agravante travels to Amsterdam every year during winter to visit his brother and to see a little of Europe.

"This is my third time to visit Europe. For me, nothing still compares with Legazpi City. Even Paris only comes second in my fave list," he said.

Agravante used to work for a printing house in Makati. He moved back to Legazpi and set up his own Internet café.

When he's not in Amsterdam, he creates and manages websites, such as LegazpiCity.net.

Agravante originally bought the domain name sneaknews.com because he wanted to feature odd and controversial news items from all over the world. Now the site helps hundreds of people throughout the globe.

"As days passed, hundreds of similar websites came up on the Web. I decided to embark on a more ambitious project—to create a comprehensive missing person directory complete with pictures. It wasn't easy. The whole setup and initial correspondence took me the whole night," he said.

"I fell asleep at 5 a.m., only to wake up a few hours later with hundreds of e-mails in my in box asking for information on their missing friends and families."

"In three days, my bandwidth reached almost three gigabytes, and was viewed by 15,000 different IP (Internet protocol) addresses, with as many as 450,000 hits. My site currently ranks [among the] top [sites] of Yahoo! and MSN with the keywords 'missing persons tsunami,'" Agravante said.

He continues to update the site at least once every hour with news items and by answering and posting hundreds of e-mail messages.

Hot news item

Sneak News was featured in print publications, such as the Sunday Morning Herald in Australia, as well as on the Web. Check out http://www.firstcoastnews.com/news/topstories/news-article.aspx?storyid=30062.

Agravante was also interviewed by a news crew for the "Twee Vandaag" (Channel 2 Today), a Dutch national TV program.

After the story is broadcast on Dutch national TV, he hopes there would be more donors to the tsunami charities so he could continue the site.

"Sneaknews.com receives 500,000 to 1 million hits every day. Most of the traffic comes from Sweden. I expect the traffic to spike even higher when the papers start carrying stories about the website. With its current bandwidth consumption, the site can be accessible for another week. This is the reason we are pleading for donations to our site," Agravante explained.

Scientists say Earth still 'ringing like bell'

From page A1

Australian National University scientists said hypersensitive gravity measuring equipment showed minute reverberations may continue for weeks.

Herb McQueen, from the university's Earth Sciences Research School, said the equipment at the Mount Stromlo observatory in Canberra showed the planet was "ringing like a bell" which had been forcefully struck.

He said the movement was imperceptible to all but the most sensitive equipment.

"(It) corresponds to about a millimeter of vertical motion of the earth," he said. "The early signals were much stronger."

McQueen said it was a rare seismic event, picked up by the observatory's machines, which are normally used to map the structure of the planet's interior.

US geophysicists said that immediately after the quake, which measured 9.0 on the Richter scale, the Earth wobbled on its axis. The cataclysm also permanently altered the map of Asia by moving some small islands up to 20 meters. *AFP*

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FORMER President Fidel V. Ramos (standing, 5th from left) and his nephew, Alaminos (Pangasinan) Mayor Hernani Braganza (7th from left) host members of the diplomatic corps on a tour of the Hundred Islands over the weekend. Yesterday, Ramos and some of the ambassadors took part in rites marking the 60th anniversary of the Lingayen Gulf landing. RYAN LIM

Japanese envoy apologizes again to Filipinos for WWII

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—The Japanese ambassador to the Philippines said here on Sunday that he hoped the wounds inflicted by World War II had healed, even as he reiterated the apology made by former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama to the Filipino people 10 years ago.

Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki said during yesterday's 60th anniversary celebration of the Lingayen Gulf landing by Gen. Douglas MacArthur that he had "the same feeling" as Murayama, who apologized for Japan's war crimes in 1995.

Yamazaki sat quietly among several ambassadors who attended the commemoration. Later, he said he was "deeply moved by the ceremonies."

The Lingayen Gulf landing on Jan. 9, 1945, signaled the start of the Allied Forces' campaign to liberate Manila and the rest of Luzon from the occupying Japanese forces.

The ambassador said though that he was not sure about the healing of "individual wounds," saying it would be presumptuous of him to speak for others.

"But as (former) President (Fidel) Ramos said in his speech, the Philippines and Japan are allied nations now," Yamazaki told the INQUIRER.

Yamazaki noted that his country has been trying to help the Philippines through development aid and the two countries, being neighbors, should protect each other.

Later, he laid a wreath at the World War II Memorial Park behind the provincial capitol, saying it was his way of "paying tribute to everyone who was killed during the war."

Diplomats from the country's allies during World War II joined some 600 war veterans from Pangasinan in commemorating the Lingayen Gulf landing.

The veterans took center-stage as they held their own "sunrise ceremony" at the War Memorial Park and offered flowers to those who gave their lives to free the Philippines.

Crack teams fan out to nab top smugglers

By Christian V. Esguerra and Gil C. Cabacungan, Jr.

ELITE units composed of "highly trained and crack" personnel from the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police, all deputized by the Bureau of Customs, will be deployed against smugglers.

Starting today, these composite teams will be hunting down big-time smugglers who have deprived the government of revenues estimated at between P100 to P150 billion annually.

"We have to institute some drastic measures to reduce this leakage in our revenue collections; and this can be done if we can stop smuggling in the country," Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, who heads the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force, said in a statement.

The NASTF was formed by Malacañang last Nov. 16 to address the persistent problem of smuggling. But since then, the NASTF has been conspicuously silent, despite the government's pledge to arrest, prosecute and jail those involved in smuggling.

This time, the NASTF appears to be more determined.

A separate team called the NASTF special operations group will go after syndicates involved in "swing operations," the illegal practice of stealing cargo from customs warehouses and dumping them in the local market.

"These smuggled goods are mostly of inferior quality and therefore sold at very low prices in Divisoria and Greenhills markets," Reyes said.

On top of field operations, NASTF men will also be stationed at the customs entry encoding division which is known to be where some importers and brokers have their papers doctored by some corrupt customs officials, Reyes said.

Businessmen are unhappy with the government's inaction over rampant smuggling at the country's ports and are losing patience over the Bureau of Customs' reluctance to prosecute the country's top smugglers.

Customs earlier submitted to the Senate a confidential list of suspected smugglers which included a Chinese-Filipino businessman with a chain of supermarkets, the relatives of a top customs official, and a popular radio broadcaster.

"We want the BOC to explain why up to now it has not run after those in the smugglers' list. Some of the names on the list have been there since the Estrada administration but still no results," said Jesus Arranza, president of the Federation of Philippine Industries.

"They are working at a snail's pace, there is no sense of urgency," said Arranza, who represents the private sector in the NASTF.

"If the BOC does not have any plan to prosecute them, we want to know why they were included in the smugglers' list," added Arranza, who noted that the list did not include known big-time smugglers.

The INQUIRER has obtained a copy of the 16-page watchlist which contains the names of individuals, their areas of operations and the goods they smuggle into the country.

Philhealth covers meningo victims

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE PHILIPPINE Health Insurance Corp. yesterday announced that it will compensate victims of meningococcemia, a fatal respiratory ailment that has afflicted residents of Baguio City and caused an epidemic scare in other parts of the country, under the government's health insurance program.

Philhealth president Francisco Duque III said meningococcemia is compensable since it is considered a catastrophic case that could cause sudden death under Philhealth rules.

Members of Philhealth and their beneficiaries who suffer from meningococcemia are entitled to P400 daily in room and board coverage and up to P16,000 worth of medicines during their period of confinement.

"Any member who will be confined in any Philhealth-accredited hospital due to meningococcemia need not worry because we will cover part of their hospitalization expenses," Duque said in a statement following the meningococcemia scare in the country's biggest cities.

Duque said Philhealth has 1,500 accredited hospitals and clinics where its members could go to seek treatment.

Duque urged non-Philhealth members to enroll in the government's health insurance agency to be able to avail of health care benefits in the event they are afflicted with a severe ailment.

The Department of Health, meanwhile, has reiterated that there are no confirmed meningococcemia cases in Metro Manila despite persistent reports of suspected cases in Malabon, Pasay City and Manila.

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Faith proves stronger than fear in Quiapo

From page A1

Two days before the feast, police arrested 16 alleged Islamic militants, quelling what some officers said was an extremist plot to mount suicide attacks involving militants whose bodies would be rigged with bombs, march during the procession and then blow everything up.

No bombs went off yesterday but there were certainly casualties—47 in all. They either suffered minor injuries in the shoving and pushing, or had fainted.

Police have released 11 of the 16 arrested Islamic converts and filed charges of illegal possession of explosives and firearms against the five others.

Some members of the intelligence community yesterday raised doubts about the operation conducted by the Philippine National Police's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

A police intelligence official described as a "mix of truth and lies" the raid on the Islamic Information Center in Manila, where the improvised bombs and high-powered firearms were purportedly found on Friday.

"Pity those who were arrested," the official told the INQUIRER on condition of anonymity. "The operation is hardly believable; we know those people (who staged the operation) and we know how they work."

The official is well-respected within the intelligence community, having been instrumental in the arrest of key terrorists, such as Muklis Yunos, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front bomb expert who had confessed his role in the Rizal Day bombings in 2000.

The official said none of the 16 whom the CIDG was quick to label as "terrorists" was ever included on the watch list of the Intelligence Group or Task Force Sanglahi, the PNP's main antiterrorism unit.

"We don't have them under our watch," another top intelligence official said. "But perhaps the unit that operated had some information about them."

Director Avelino Razon Jr., National Capital Region Police Office chief, was also cautious. He said there was no definite proof that those arrested were out to bomb Quiapo.

"It appears that they planned to plant bombs in Metro Manila and Quiapo was just a possibility," Razon told the INQUIRER.

The Associated Press quoted Razon as saying: "We have preempted their plan ... [The] terrorists are just waiting for the moment that we would let down our guard, and that is when they would strike."

Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza, CIDG officer in charge, maintained that he and his men got the right people.

"It's just a matter of looking at the issue at the right perspective," Mendoza said in a phone interview. "Many Muslims had called me, saying some of these Islamic converts really destroy the real and genuine tradition of the Muslims."

Mendoza had said that those arrested were members of the Hukbong Khalid Trinidad, supposedly a cell of an organization of Islamic converts with links to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah.

He denied knowledge of reports that some members of the Muslim community were outraged by the arrests, denouncing the police allegations as baseless.

Well before the procession started, Plaza Miranda was already a turbulent sea of devotees waiting for the church doors to open and for the image of the Nazarene to emerge.

The throng spilled out of the plaza and into the streets of Evangelista, Villalobos, Carlos Palanca and Carriedo, and Quezon Boulevard. *With an AP report*

Quezon folk free rare marine turtle

From page A1

He said his group had tried to release the turtle in the open sea, but its flippers had gotten entangled in the net.

Redebeso said they were aware that most sea turtles were considered endangered and that it was unlawful to catch and kill them.

The fishermen said they learned of the prohibition from fishery seminars and radio programs, especially "Kasama ng Kalikasan," which is aired over the Lucena-based dwTI-AM.

Leatherback turtles are among the species included in the US Endangered Species Act and in Appendix 1 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Section 97 of Republic Act No. 8550, or the "The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998," states that it is unlawful to fish or take rare, threatened or endangered species as listed in the CITES and as determined by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Violators will be punished with imprisonment of 12 to 20 years or a fine of P120,000, or both, and the cancellation of fishing permit if a registered fishing boat is the culprit.

Gratitude

When informed of the "unusual catch," Carlo Abellanosa, owner of Montecarlo Beach Resort, organized a group to protect the marine turtle.

"Since this was the first big sea turtle that the villagers had ever seen, I immediately took some preemptive actions to foil any plan to butcher the creature, if there was any. That leatherback sea turtle is an endangered species and has to be protected," he said.

Abellanosa, chair of the local tourism council, said he handed P500 to the fishermen as his token of gratitude for bringing the turtle to the shore alive.

At first, Abellanosa said, the turtle was hostile. He said that when a group of five men tried to hold still one of its front flippers, "they all lost their hold when the turtle swayed it."

Abellanosa reported the catch to Agdangan Mayor Adam Aguilar, his cousin, and to local environment officials.

He also told Tanggol Kalikasan-Southern Tagalog, a public interest environmental legal defense center based in Lucena.

"I knew that we had to set free the turtle back to the sea after the documentation to avoid more stressful conditions that could damage the creature, emotionally and physically," Abellanosa said.

Mel Camara, chief of the Protected Area Wildlife Management Service in Quezon, said the male sea turtle was 117-cm wide and 165-cm long. Its head had a diameter of 33 cm and was 40 cm long.

The age of the turtle was placed at between 25 and 35 years.

"He was too heavy. Even a group of 10 people would find it hard to move the creature," Camara said.

As news of the catch spread, people started to come to the village, especially when it was low tide to catch a glimpse of the turtle.

Glenn Forbes, program officer of Tanggol Kalikasan, said the people gathered around the turtle at low tide were causing more tension to the creature.

Some of the residents noticed a thick mucus-like white fluid that welled in the eyes of the turtle. "He's crying because he is afraid," Forbes told the crowd.

Book helps heal spirit ...

From page A1

physical wounds, but of their spirit as well. Adults, and children most specially, are vulnerable to the long-term psychological effects of their horrible experiences if no one helps them address and process their trauma.

Noted clinical psychologist, researcher and author Dr. Ma. Lourdes A. Carandang has been involved in addressing post-traumatic stress of survivors of major disasters in recent years and helping them come to terms with their pain and loss.

The book, "Pakikipagkapwa Damdamin: Accompanying Survivors of Disasters" (Bookmark, 1996), is the result of Carandang's and her Ateneo de Manila University team's efforts, funded by Unicef, to give psychological aid to survivors of the 1990 earthquake and the 1991 Mount Pinatubo and 1993 Mayon Volcano eruptions.

This "helping manual" for those working with survivors could very well have been written for the November landslides that claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed thousands of homes in Luzon. It could also find context in the Dec. 26 tsunami tragedy that killed more than 150,000 people along the coastlines of Asia and parts of Africa.

"Pakikipagkapwa-Damdamin," which is being reprinted, is different from other books on psychosocial rehabilitation. It uses the psychological approach instead of the symptom-oriented method. It examines the inner world of survivors by "letting them speak for themselves."

The phenomenology of the helper or carer is also laid bare. How do they see themselves, how do they sustain their level of energy?

Community barometer

The book reveals that children are the barometers of the psychological and emotional climate of the community. No matter how the adults try to conceal their true feelings, the children always provide an accurate gauge of where the community was at.

Children are the perfect entry points for gaining rapport, whether it is through "kodak magic" or games.

A therapist uses a number of ways to make the atmosphere more accepting for a child.

Through "mirroring" or imitating the child's posture or facial expression, the psychologist enters the child's world and makes the child feel at ease, connected and accepted.

"Following the child's lead" is letting the child set the pace for beginning interaction. The therapist keeps his voice down, he is friendly but not overeager, and waits for the child's response instead of demanding it.

Introductions, using names, sitting close and touching also make the child feel safe. Listening and showing interest in their answers are some of the many techniques to gain entry to a child's world.

Drawing, writing

Child therapists have always relied on nonverbal ways a child communicates. A child's drawing speaks a thousand words. It is also a tool for drawing out more stories.

Says Carandang: "Asking a child to draw enriched our pool of information. Drawing allowed children to re-live their traumatic experiences, a process necessary for their recovery. For example, when invited to draw her story of the earthquake, a 12-year-old illustrated a scene that she had failed to mention during the verbal interview."

Writing, Carandang adds, is also an effective tool for rapport and self-expression among older children. It can even be "infectious" to other children and adults.

Using story metaphors (about a group of ants, for example, that wanted to eat an *ensaymada* but whose path was blocked by water), play therapy, re-framing or looking at things in a new light, talking about lessons learned, making use of their senses and their connectedness to nature—these help children make sense of their experiences.

Stuck adults

Carandang recalls her experience working with survivors of the 1990 earthquake in Nueva Ecija: "Working with adults who were in various emotional states was an essential part of the holistic multilevel process. As we met face-to-face with them, we found out that we needed to help them move on with their grieving process, that most of them were stuck and needed help to get unstuck from their immobilized states."

She narrates: "Emotional states varied from bitterness, pain, depression to suicidal thoughts. For some, intrusive thoughts were a problem."

She lists the survivors' lamentations:

- "Sometimes, I think I will go crazy."
- "We don't know where to turn to."
- "Our land was washed out. Everything is gone. I grow weak when I think of it. That used to be land, the most beautiful land. It's gone."
- "When everything is back to what it used to be, maybe that is when my mind will be back to normal."

But the survivors were able to cope. They never blamed anybody for what happened. They continued to hope, worked hard work and persevered. They also recognized the courage their children have given them.

Talking helped: "*Alam namin ang damdamin ng bawat isa. Nagbibidahan kami. Kung minsan, nakikibida na ako, nakikihunta ako sa mga kapitbahay para lalong malibang ko iyong iniisip ko* (We know what each one feels. We swap stories. Sometimes, I talk a lot about my own experience. I talk about what I think to my neighbors, the better to distract myself from my worries)."

Metaphors of nature

Since their lives have been spent close to nature, Carandang says, adults have a deep emotional bond with it. Familiar nature scenes were used as metaphors to help adults regain a sense of transcendence or ability to look beyond their present situation.

One therapist used two mountains that marked the boundaries of the relief center—one barren, the other lush—to re-frame the outlook of an adult stuck in his feeling of loss.

"Many adults," Carandang says, "believed that God sent the disasters to punish them for their wrongdoings."

The team had to explain to survivors that the disasters were not their fault in order to bring them out of self-blame.

The support system, prayers, even specialized techniques such as hypnosis and massage helped those suffering from psychosomatic reactions.

Recalls Carandang: "Perhaps the most tender and touching part of the prayer service that our team experienced was the offertory, where the people, again, despite their sorrow, offered themselves quietly to the Lord, calling Him *Amang mapagmahal* (loving Father). Finally, the community offered a big rock—a symbol of their *tibay ng pananampalataya* (strength of their faith). This last offering served to remind them of the deeper directions of the community's healing: stronger and more compelling than the shared outpouring of grief was the will to renew lives of enduring trust, faith and hope."

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FILIPINO IN MUSLIM WORLD LEAGUE
Saudi Arabian Ambassador Mohammed Ameen Wali (center) welcomes Aleem Elias Makarandas (right) into the Muslim World League Constituent Council (Rabita). Makarandas is now one of the 60-member Rabita who were chosen from among the 1.5-billion Muslims worldwide to formulate Islamic-oriented plans and programs, and coordinate their implementation. At left is his senior adviser and spokesperson Saeed A. Daof, director general of the Center for the Promotion of Peace and Development in Mindanao. The Rabita has official observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

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ARMM tutors lose insurance coverage

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE THOUSANDS of public school teachers in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) are reportedly without health insurance coverage after the Department of Education office in the region stopped remitting their premiums to their private carrier.

An official of the Philippine Public School Teachers Association, the biggest organization of public school teachers in the country, said they only found this out when one of their members was hospitalized recently.

Hajan Jafaar, supervisor of the West Sibutu District Division of Tawi-Tawi, was confined for eight days at Doctor's Hospital in Zamboanga City suffering from typhoid fever.

To his surprise, Fortune Care Insurance refused to pay his hospital bills amounting to more than P20,000.

"Fortune said it did not receive any remittances from the DepEd-ARMM from January 2004 up to the present, so the policy contract between the teachers and Fortune became null and void," said Abdulgafar Napii, a PPSTA official in the ARMM.

Napii said this surprised the teachers since their health insurance premiums were religiously being deducted from their salaries.

Napii said other insurance firms were now reluctant to insure ARMM teachers since this was not the first time DepEd-ARMM had failed to remit premiums.

Napii said unless the DepEd-ARMM settled with Fortune, the teachers would not go on election duty. He said the teachers would not risk their lives knowing they would not get any assistance in case something untoward happened to them.

"Our public school teachers already suffer a lot because of our low salaries. Let's not add to it by taking away what's due them," Napii said.

Tighter watch ordered on HK-bound Pinays

By Jerome Aning

IMMIGRATION officers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and other airports have been ordered to tightly screen Filipino women leaving for Hong Kong following reports of young women being smuggled into the Chinese territory and ending up as sex workers.

Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. issued the order after learning of the increasing number of Filipino women in Hong Kong being victimized by illegal recruiters and human trafficking syndicates.

Fernandez said he instructed immigration officers at Naia and other international airports in the country to strictly scrutinize the travel papers of Filipino women bound for Hong Kong and to check them again after they had boarded their flights if they were traveling on tourist visas.

He said the check of the women's passports would be conducted twice due to reports that working visas were usually given to the women once they got inside the plane.

Fernandez warned of severe disciplinary action—including suspension and dismissal from the service—against any immigration official caught conniving with illegal recruiters in the human smuggling racket.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez had earlier ordered the bureau to tightly screen Hong Kong-bound Filipino women after receiving a report from the Philippine consulate there on the plight of trafficking victims who had sought its help.

According to the report, the victims were offered jobs in Hong Kong bars as receptionists and entertainers but were instructed to enter Hong Kong as tourists.

They were also given "show money" which they would present in case airport immigration officers required them to demonstrate their financial capability to travel.

Upon reaching Hong Kong, the girls were allegedly brought to boarding houses where they were given orientation lectures and made to take drugs.

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Palestinians choose Arafat successor

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Palestinians voted for a successor to veteran leader Yasser Arafat Sunday with his longtime deputy Mahmud Abbas poised for a victory that could pave the way for a revival of the Middle East peace process.

"This process is taking place in a marvellous fashion and is an illustration of how the Palestinian people aspire to democracy," Abbas said after casting his ballot in the Muqataa leadership compound where Arafat is buried.

"The turnout has so far been encouraging and strong, especially among women. I am happy to have exercised my democratic right by voting," he added.

Israel said Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was ready to meet with the winner of the election, a move which could breathe new life into a peace process left in tatters by four years of deadly conflict.

With polls giving him at least a 30-point lead over his nearest rival, the independent Mustafa Barghuti, Abbas' main fear is that vast swathes of the electorate will heed a boycott call by the radical Islamist movement Hamas.

However, turnout appeared to be strong at all 1,073 polling booths in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the central elections commission reporting no major problems. Residents of occupied east Jerusalem were also voting at post offices in the city.

Israel has promised to keep a low profile until Monday night, keeping its troops out of main Palestinian population centers and lifting restrictions at roadblocks to allow voters easy access to the polling booths.

Negotiations minister Saeb Erakat said the election represented a historic achievement by the Palestinian people. The only previous election for the head of the Palestinian Authority was in 1996 at the height of the now moribund peace process.

"This is the first time in history that people who are full under the domination of an other people, Israel, are going to the polls," he told AFP.

Mohammed Othman said the vote would serve as a beacon of democracy for the wider Arab world as he cast his ballot at the Muqataa.

"What we are seeing today in Palestine, you wouldn't see anywhere else in the Arab world," said the 36-year-old. "I hope that the new president will respect the people and liberate Palestine."

Bassam al-Salhi, a candidate for the People's Party, the ex-communist party, also voted at the compound.

"This is an important day for Palestinian democracy," he told reporters. "We are leading a double battle: against the Israeli occupation and to install democracy. I am sure that the election will be fair."

However, Barghuti charged that there had been blatant irregularities, claiming that the supposedly indelible ink marked on the thumbnails of voters could be washed off with water.

During his campaign, Abbas leant heavily on the legacy of Arafat even though the pair enjoyed an often tempestuous relationship.

Much of his campaign rhetoric has been straight out of the Arafat textbook with calls for the creation of an independent Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital, the right of return for refugees and the release of all prisoners held by Israel.

However, Abbas, who has already stepped in to take control of the PLO, has also dotted his speeches with controversial criticism of the armed Palestinian uprising and denunciation of rocket attacks by Gaza-based militants.

An Abbas presidency is likely to lead to a resumption of top-level talks with Israel, frozen since Abbas walked out after a short stint as Arafat's first premier in September 2003.

One of Sharon's senior aides said Sunday that the premier was ready to meet the winner.

"The prime minister intends to meet the elected Palestinian president as soon as possible," he said, stopping short of referring specifically to Abbas.

Such a meeting "would focus on security issues and security coordination between Israel and the Palestinian Authority" ahead of Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip scheduled for this year, he said.

At an end-of-campaign press conference, Abbas told reporters there was no option but to do business with Sharon, who long boycotted Arafat as an obstacle to peace.

"We have no other choice but to sit with him and we will do our best to convince him of Palestinian rights," he said.

The vote is also being closely monitored in Washington. US President George W. Bush also shunned Arafat but did invite Abbas to the White House in 2003 and has said that he regards the emergence of a new Palestinian leader as an opportunity to open a new chapter in the Middle East peace process.

John Kerry, the defeated rival to Bush in November's US presidential election, was among the hundreds of foreign observers witnessing Palestinian democracy in action.

"It's a very important day, very exciting day. It's a historic day for the Palestinian people," he said.

A total of 1.8 million Palestinians are entitled to vote. Preliminary results are expected shortly after polls close 12 hours later although a final announcement is not scheduled until Monday morning. *AFP*

BACK-DROPPED by posters of Palestinian presidential candidate Mahmud Abbas, elder Palestinian men enjoy the sun the West Bank town of Abu Dis on the edge of Jerusalem, Jan. 8. AFP

Abbas takes stage after Arafat's death

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Some of the main events since Arafat's death on Nov 11.

- Nov. 11—Mahmoud Abbas takes over as head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the top policy making body.
- Nov. 14—Abbas escapes injury in a gunfight triggered by hostile militants in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian leaders order elections within 60 days.
- Nov. 17—Abbas urges militants to halt attacks in order to allow a smooth election, but fails to win their backing.
- Nov. 21US Secretary of State Colin Powell begins new peace push in Middle East, winning Israeli pledge to assure smooth Palestinian election.
- Nov. 22—Dominant Fatah movement names Abbas as its candidate for elections.
- Nov. 25—Jailed uprising leader Marwan Barghouthi, also a Fatah member, decides to run for president in what is seen as a real threat to Abbas' candidacy.
- Nov. 28—Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Abbas say in interviews they are ready to meet.
- Dec. 1—Islamic militant group Hamas says it will boycott the presidential election.
- Dec. 9—Sharon wins crucial vote to forge a ruling coalition that will allow withdrawal from the occupied Gaza Strip, part of the territory that Palestinians want for a state.
- Dec. 12—Barghouthi quits election race after weeks of wavering, leaving Abbas the overwhelming favorite. Hamas and Fatah militants kill five Israeli soldiers in huge tunnel bomb attack as violence surges.
- Dec. 14—Abbas calls for an end to all armed struggle in his strongest comments since becoming PLO leader.
- Dec. 18—Israeli troops raid southern Gaza Strip, killing 11 Palestinians before incursion ends on Dec. 19.
- Dec. 23—Palestinians vote in first local elections for nearly 30 years. The ballot passes smoothly and Hamas makes a strong showing.
- Dec. 25—Abbas and six other contenders launch election campaign. He promises to stick by Arafat's positions. *Reuters*

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US nuke sub runs aground

LOS ANGELES—US military planes and ships rushed Saturday to help the US nuclear submarine San Francisco after it ran aground in the Pacific injuring about 20 crew, one seriously, the US Navy said.

The vessel's nuclear plant was not damaged in the accident which happened while the San Francisco was conducting underwater operations 560 kilometers south of its base at Guam, the Navy said.

The submarine was heading back to base under its own steam but on the surface on Saturday.

The Los Angeles class submarine, which has a crew of 137, was heading for a port visit in Brisbane, Australia, when the accident happened on Friday.

A Pacific fleet spokesperson said about 20 crew were injured, and one was reported in critical condition.

The injured were being treated on board by medics with special emergency training, the spokesperson said.

But the submarine was still too far out of helicopter range for the evacuation of the most seriously injured sailor, Pacific Fleet spokesperson Master Chief John Barnett said.

"We are sending air and sea units out to meet the ship to bring in extra medical help," he pointed out. *AFP*

Sudan peace deal may lead to refugees' return

NAIROBI—Singing, dancing Sudanese exiles gathered to witness the signing on Sunday of a deal ending Africa's longest-running civil war, saying they were determined to go home and rebuild their lives.

The Islamist government and southern rebels are due to sign the accord at a ceremony in a stadium in the Kenyan capital Nairobi later on Sunday, sealing an end to 21 years of war in the oil-exporting south of Africa's largest country.

The agreement is expected to trigger the return of more than half a million Sudanese who fled into neighboring countries and the gradual resettlement of four million people displaced inside Sudan by the conflict.

"I feel great. If I had wings I would be flying," said Grace Datiro, 35, a southerner who has lived in Kenya for 14 years since war drove her from her home in Sudan's Equatoria region.

"Of course it (returning to Sudan) will be difficult for the children. But we have explained to them that home is best."

She was seated among a growing crowd of exiles and refugees entertained by bear-chested Sudanese and Kenyan dancers who leapt and whirled and beat drums to celebrate the coming peace.

"We are so happy today. We don't want any more bloodshed in southern Sudan. I want to go home. I have 12 years to catch up on," said musician Malek Malual, 25, from Sudan's Abyei region.

Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) leader John Garang and his main negotiating partner, Sudanese First Vice President Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, are due to sign the comprehensive peace agreement in front of African heads of state and US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The southern civil war began in 1983 and broadly pits the Islamist government based in Khartoum against the mainly Christian and animist south. The fighting has killed some two million people and forced millions more to flee their homes.

Oil, ethnicity and ideology have complicated the conflict.

Diplomats say a north-south deal may be a model for a separate conflict in Sudan's western Darfur region, where the crisis has uprooted more than 1.6 million Darfuris and 70,000 people have died in fighting and war-related disease.

Awadia al-Khatieeb, a government official in Khartoum who was visiting Nairobi for the ceremony, said: "Today is a very big day for us. We (in the north) have also suffered.

"This salvation government of (President Omar Hassan) al-Bashir is the first government to be serious about peace in the country. If this one (war) has been solved then Darfur will also end. *Reuters*

'Suicide' BBQ bricks alarm HK

HONG KONG—Barbecue briquettes may soon be sold under lock and key in Hong Kong where calls are growing for restrictions on their sale following a spate of charcoal-burning suicides, a report said Sunday.

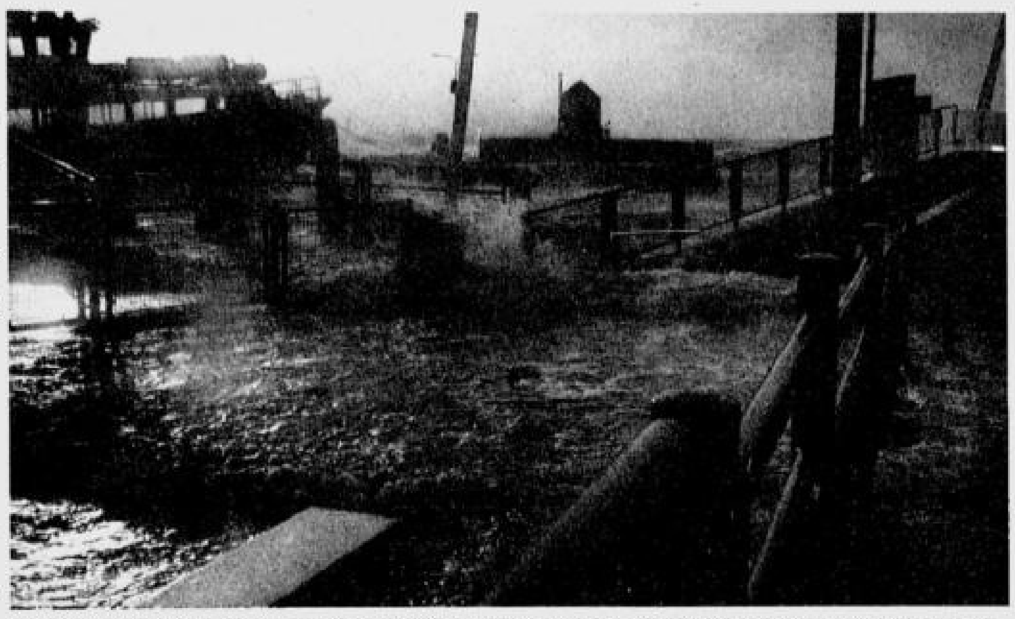
Supermarkets chains in the former British colony will hold talks with suicide prevention officials to discuss ways of curbing a growing trend among suicides who gas themselves by burning charcoal in unventilated rooms.

The talks, reported in the Sunday Morning Post, follow the release of figures showing some 300 people kill themselves each year by burning charcoal—a quarter of all Hong Kong suicides in 2003.

The trend has even spread to other parts of the region, including Japan, Taiwan and New Zealand, the report added.

Campaigners want charcoal sales to come under the same restrictions as guns and drugs.

"We believe suicide prevention is everyone's business," Paul Yip, director of the Hong Kong University's suicide prevention center, was quoted as saying. *AFP*



THE HARBOR of Esbjerg, southern Jutland, Denmark, flooded by North Sea waters Jan. 8 at height of storm. AFP

Violent storms pound northern Europe, bring deaths, floods, damage

LONDON—At least eight people were killed, more than 1,000 homes were flooded and 330,000 others left without power on Saturday as violent storms swept through northern Europe, bringing hurricane force winds and heavy rain.

Denmark, southern Sweden and the British Isles bore the brunt of the conditions, with 100 people forced to spend the night on a ferry after it ran aground in southwest Scotland, while a Dutch freighter issued a mayday call off the Danish coast.

In northwestern England, meanwhile, the center of the city of Carlisle was submerged underwater, with locals sheltering on upper floors, watching cars float past in the street below.

Thousands of people were forced to abandon their homes in the city on Saturday evening, being rescued either by boat or by helicopter from the roof, local police said.

Four people were killed in Denmark—two motorists who died when trees crashed onto their cars, and two others who were killed when a roof blew off a building, police said.

In southern Sweden, two motorists were also killed when trees fell on their cars and a third was killed by a passing car when he tried to remove a fallen tree from a road. A fourth man was killed on his farm when bales of hay came crashing down on him during the storm, media reported.

The weather also wreaked havoc for rail traffic.

In northern England, a man was feared dead after being swept away by a fast-flowing river near the city of Bradford, police said.

Copenhagen's Kastrup airport closed down for several hours, as did the Malmoe Sturup airport in southern Sweden, as hurricane force winds of up to 151 kilometers an hour lashed the region and authorities urged people to stay indoors if possible.

Danish sea rescue services reported that a Dutch freighter off Denmark's west coast had called for assistance after reporting a fire on board in heavy seas.

The 15-member crew tried to extinguish the flames but later evacuated the vessel and boarded a lifeboat. They were picked up safely by a Danish rescue ship after several hours.

"All 15 are safely on board the ship," Hansen said.

In Sweden, some 341,000 households were left without electricity, primarily in the southern and western parts of the country, power companies Vattenfall and Sydkraft said.

"Unfortunately we think many people are going to be without power until Sunday," Sydkraft spokesperson Jan-Erik Olsson said.

All train traffic in southern Sweden was suspended, and car and train traffic on the Oeresund bridge linking Copenhagen to southern Sweden was also stopped because of the storm.

"There are uprooted trees in several places, rooftiles blown onto the tracks near Helsingborg (in southern Sweden) ... It's chaos right now," Mattias Hennius, a spokesperson for the Swedish rail authority Banverket told Swedish news agency TT.

Emergency crews were having a hard time reaching people in need of help.

Dozens of ferry routes to and from Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Britain and Germany were canceled, while the Swedish coast guard reported that numerous vessels had anchored in the southern Baltic to seek shelter from the storm.

Meanwhile, the Barsebaeck and Ringhals nuclear reactors, both in southern Sweden, were shut down due to the storm, and the Swedish meteorological service SMHI warned of flood risks for several rivers in the south and west due to rising water levels brought on by heavy rains.

In Germany's northern state of Schleswig-Holstein, which borders Denmark, train traffic was halted, while road traffic came to a standstill on the North and Baltic Sea coasts, on the bridge over the Kiel Canal linking the two seas, and on the one connecting the Baltic Sea island of Fehmarn to the continent. *AFP*

Japan to set goals in 10 technology fields

TOKYO—The Japanese government plans to set itself national goals in 10 critical technology fields to strengthen the country's global competitiveness, a report said Sunday.

The government aims to become the leader in the areas which include supercomputers and measurement and seabed research technologies, the Yomiuri Shimbun said, citing government sources.

Also included are biotechnology, nanotechnology and other advanced science and technology fields in which Japan, the United States and Europe are in fierce competition, the report said.

Tokyo has decided to narrow its major strategic goals to allow for an efficient distribution of limited budgetary and human resources, the report said.

The goals will be included in the government's third-term basic plan for science and technology, which will cover the period between fiscal 2006 and 2010, to be compiled in the year to March 2006, the Yomiuri said.

The strategic goals were set by a committee of the Council for Science and Technology, a government advisory panel.

"The roots of the nation's vitality and presence in the international community lie in the international competitiveness of its industries," the committee said in a report. *AFP*

Maynilad Water Services, Inc.
Manila Water

Bulletin No. 1
Umiray Tunnel/El Niño

Umiray Tunnel

- Umiray River in General Nakar, Quezon is one of the water sources for Metro Manila contributing 20% of total raw water supply.
- On November 29, 2004, Typhoon Winnie resulted in strong flooding which blocked Umiray tunnel with silt and rock/wood debris.
- MWSS and its concessionaires (Manila Water and Maynilad) have formed a task force to restore water inflow from Umiray.
- Actions taken by Task Force:
  - Initially earmarked Php 60 million for immediate repairs
  - Contractors on-site repair works (removal of silt and debris) and clearing of access road ongoing
- Outlook: Immediate restoration of water inflow to Angat before the start of the rainy season

El Niño

- El Niño is a weather phenomenon that results in drought conditions in the Philippines.
- Initial below-normal rainfall shows mild El Niño will prevail until June, 2005.
- Raw water supply in Angat Reservoir continues to fall due to less water inflow (partly attributed to Umiray tunnel problem).
- Continuing actions taken by MWSS and its concessionaires (Maynilad and Manila Water):
  - Intensify leak repairs
  - Develop alternative short-term water supply
  - Water quality monitoring

Contact Details:
Maynilad Hot Line: 1626
Manila Water Hot Line: 1627
MWSS Administrator's Office: 922-2969

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   5.2. Existing depositors of qualified products who will increase and maintain their ADBs within the promo period - Every P1,000.00 increase in ADB from October 22, 2004 to January 21, 2005 (Reference ADB) will earn 1 raffle point. The higher the ADB, the more raffle points will be earned by the existing depositors.

6. Exportbank's Deposito Mo, 1 Milyon ang Panalo Raffle Promo will be held on February 4, 2005 at the Exportbank Head Office, Exportbank Plaza, Makati City to be witnessed by a Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Representative.
7. A deposit account can win only once. In the event that the raffle number pertaining to the same account is drawn more than once, the said account will be awarded with the prize that has greater value.
8. In case of disputes, the decision of Exportbank with the concurrence of the DTI shall be deemed final.
9. The Bank will shoulder the 20% Tax for prizes worth more than P10,000.00.
10. Winners will be notified via registered mail and their names will also be published in a newspaper of general circulation.
11. Exportbank reserves the right to feature the winning depositors in its PR write-ups and/or advertisements but without additional compensation to them.
12. Accounts should be active until February 4, 2005
13. When claiming their prizes, the winning depositors must present their valid IDs (e.g. passport, driver's license, company ID, school ID) together with the mailed notice to the branch where they opened their account.
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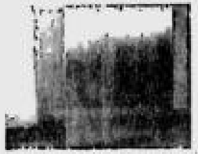

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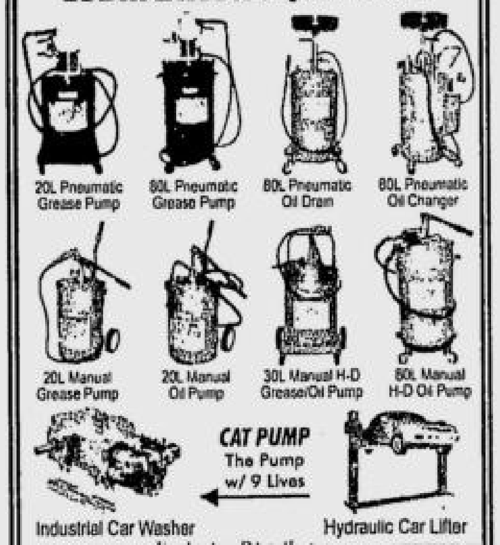

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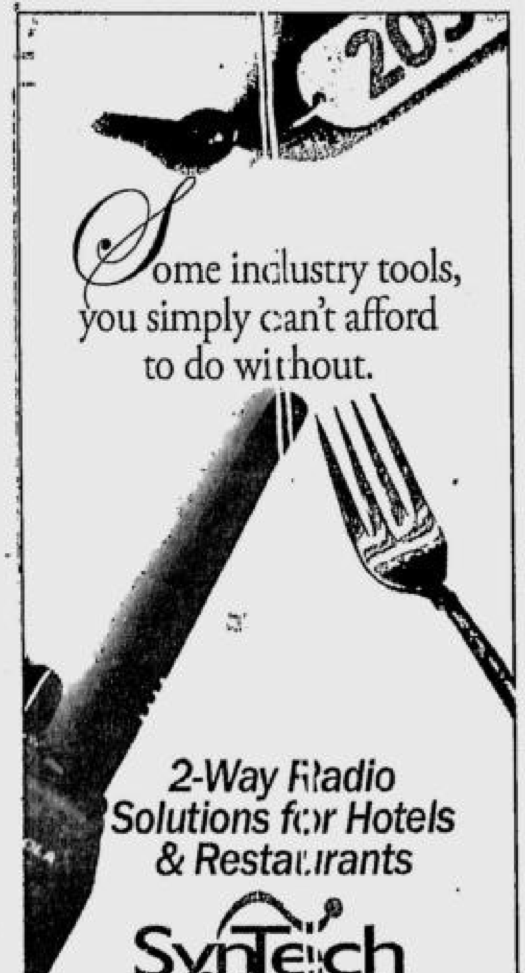

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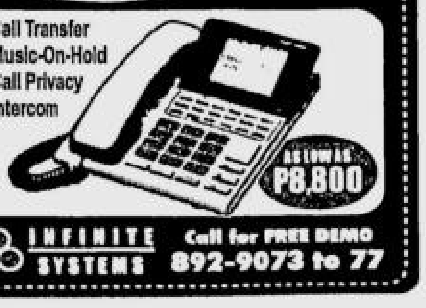

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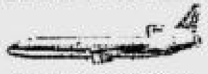

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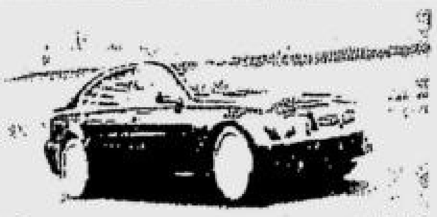

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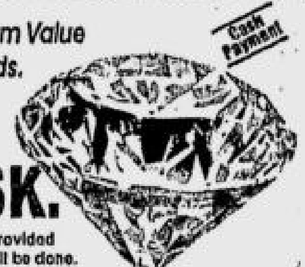

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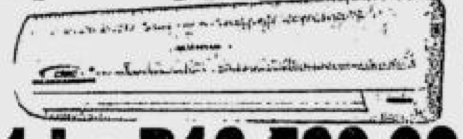

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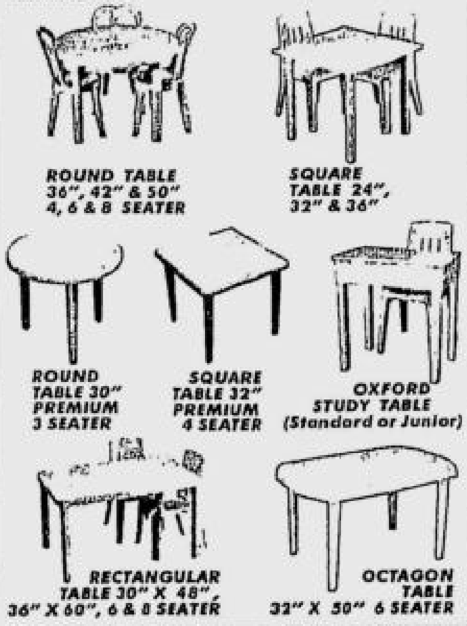

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US air strike hits wrong house in Iraq, kills 5

BAGHDAD—A US warplane bombed a house mistaken for an insurgency hideout in northern Iraq, killing at least five people, while a car bomb killed one, and four Iraqi officials were kidnapped in the run-up to national elections.

During a US army search for a suspected insurgent leader, an F-16 jet dropped a 500-pound laser guided bomb on a home south of the main northern city of Mosul Saturday, the military said in a statement.

"The house was not the intended target for the air strike. The intended target was another location nearby," it said.

"The multinational force in Iraq deeply regrets the loss of possibly innocent lives."

Five people died in the pre-dawn strike, a US military spokesperson said.

The military promised an investigation into the incident, which came as US troops swept the area for insurgents ahead of Jan. 30 elections, which militant leaders have threatened to sabotage.

An official from a joint US-Iraqi security center for Salahuddin province said the air strike targeted a suspected insurgent hideout in al-Aitha, a village on the border between Salahuddin and Nineveh provinces.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, put the death toll at 13, including four women and three children. He said the dead were all from the same family.

In May, a US air strike near Qaim, a town on the border with Syria, killed around 40 people. Locals claimed that the strike hit a wedding party, while the Americans said the house was a gathering point for "terrorists."

The US military has also acknowledged that innocent civilians were killed during air strikes on suspected insurgent targets in the former rebel stronghold of Fallujah from June until November, when an offensive was launched to reclaim the city from insurgents.

In other violence, one person was killed and 20 wounded in a car bombing south of Baghdad Saturday. Police said all of the casualties were civilians. *AFP*

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US eyes hit squads to get Iraq reb leaders

NEW YORK—The Pentagon is debating whether to set up elite hit-squads to target leaders of the Iraq insurgency in a new strategy based on tactics used against leftist guerrillas in Central America 20 years ago, Newsweek magazine reported on Saturday.

One proposal would send US Special Forces teams to advise, support and possibly train Iraqi squads of handpicked Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and Shiite militiamen to target Sunni insurgents and their sympathizers, Newsweek said, citing military insiders familiar with the discussions.

The squads may operate across the border in Syria, Newsweek said on its website, but added it was unclear whether they would assassinate leaders or be involved in "snatch" operations.

The magazine said the plan is being called "the Salvador option" after strategy instigated during the Reagan administration's battle against the leftist guerrilla insurgency in El Salvador in the early 1980s.

Then, faced with a losing war against Salvadoran rebels, the US government funded or supported "nationalist" forces to hunt down and kill rebel leaders and sympathizers.

"What everyone agrees is that we can't just go on as we are," one unidentified senior military officer told Newsweek.

"We have to find a way to take the offensive against the insurgents. Right now, we are playing defense. And we are losing."

Newsweek said Pentagon sources emphasize there has been no decision to launch the special squads. The defense department had no comment on the Newsweek article.

Amid concern over a bold and growing insurgency, the Pentagon is sending retired Gen. Gary Luck to Iraq next week to review overall military operations.

Meanwhile, The Sunday Telegraph newspaper reported that the British government will this week announce the politically risky move of sending up to 650 more troops to Iraq to provide security during the Jan. 30 election.

Iraq's long oppressed Shiite majority is poised to sweep the election, all the more so as many members of the Sunni Arab elite which dominated Saddam Hussein's regime and all previous Iraqi governments are expected to boycott the vote. *Reuters*

Guantanamo prison now 3 years in operation as questions abound

By Paisley Dodds

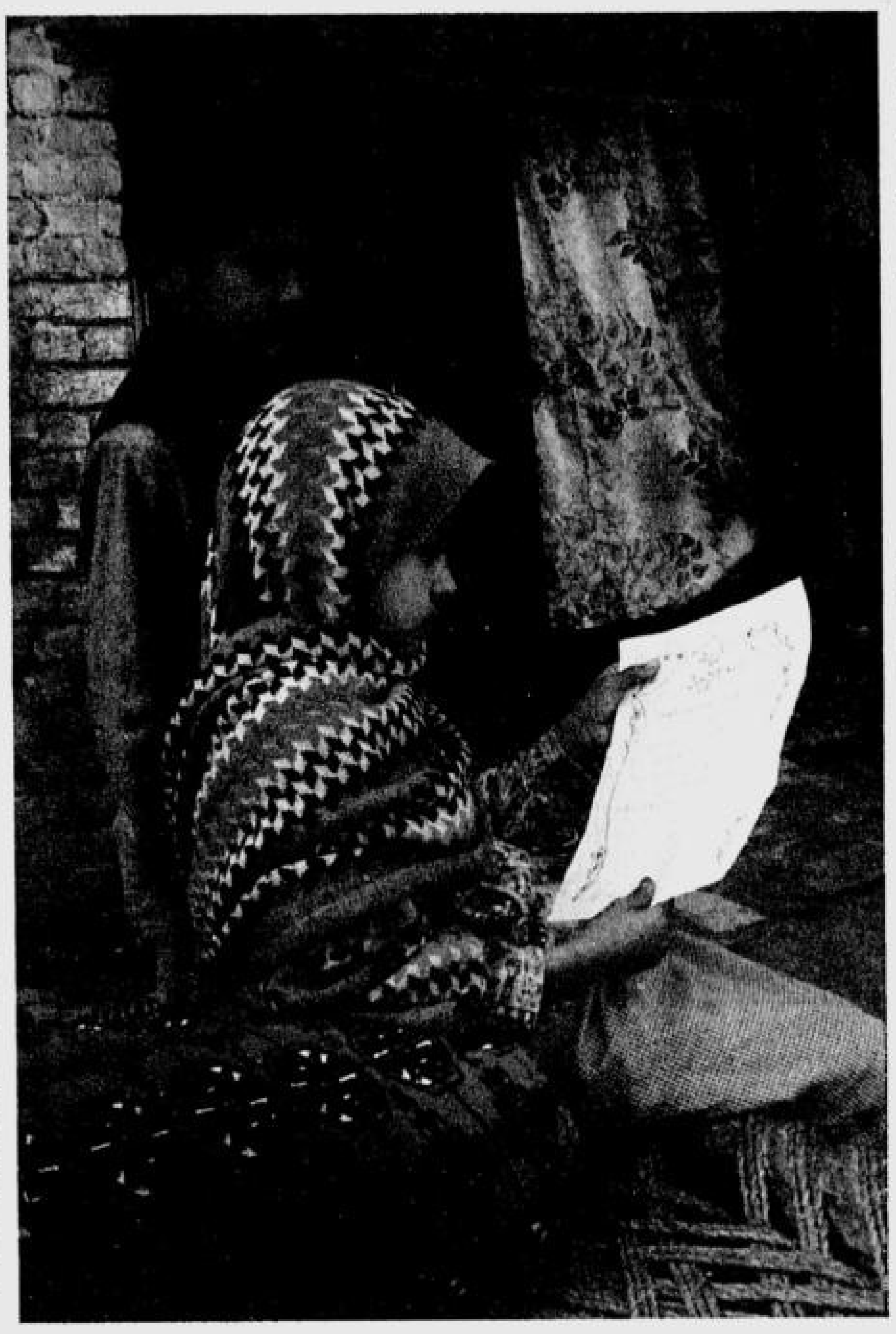
GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba—Three years after the US military opened a special prison for terror suspects, this outpost in Cuba is taking on the look of permanency with a $25 million (euro19 million) planned prison, $1.7 million (euro1.3 million) psychiatric wing and permanent guard force.

Most of the 550 prisoners from 42 countries aren't considered to be of significant intelligence value any longer, but many swept up during the US-led war in Afghanistan aren't expected to be going home anytime soon either—some because of stalled legal proceedings, others because they still pose an alleged threat to the United States or its allies.

"Where this will go four or five years down the road, I don't know," said Army Brig. Gen. Jay Hood, who has been in command of the Guantanamo Bay mission for about nine months.

The uncertainties of the mission coupled with multiplying allegations of abuse and mistreatment at the hands of US forces are problematic to lawyers and human rights groups who have long argued that the Guantanamo Bay prison camp is an affront to American values.

"Guantanamo has become an icon of lawlessness," said the London-based Amnesty International. "In its more than 1,000 days of executive detentions, it has become a symbol of a government's attempt to put itself above the law. The example it sets is dangerous to us all."



EIGHT-YEAR-OLD Khadija Ahmed and her brother Abdullah read a letter sent by their father from Guantanamo Bay, Dec. 23, 2004 in the village of Regi near Peshawar, Pakistan. AP

Only 4 charged

Only four men have been charged since the mission began and most of the prisoners have been held without being charged or having access to attorneys.

Ten cases of abuse or mistreatment have also strained the mission, and documents published recently show that FBI agents warned the US government about such incidents in 2002, more than a year before the scandal at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison. One letter, written by a senior justice department official and obtained by The Associated Press, suggests the Pentagon failed to act on the FBI complaints. Other documents detail cases outside the substantiated 10, including one where a prisoner was shackled and left lying in his own feces for hours.

The military, which has ordered an independent investigation into the cases, insists most of them are old and many of the questionable interrogation techniques are no longer in use.

Although all the prisoners are accused of links to Afghanistan's ousted Taliban regime or the al-Qaida terrorist network, Osama bin Laden has remained at large since the Sept. 11 terror attacks that killed nearly 3,000 in the United States.

Some of those being held in Guantanamo include an al-Qaida financier who was in Orlando, Florida, the same day as Sept, 11 hijacker Mohammed Atta; another who allegedly designed a prototype shoe bomb; and a third who plotted to attack oil tankers in the Persian Gulf using explosive-laden fishing boats, according to Pentagon spokesperson Barbara Burfeind.

But "the majority of the individuals that are here today ... are not of intelligence value—right now," said Steve Rodriguez, a civilian in charge of interrogations.

No intel value

The four charged prisoners are low-level suspects, including Bin Laden's driver, an al-Qaida accountant, a propagandist and an Australian cowboy turned Taliban fighter.

The government's intention was to try the men before military commissions. But US District Judge James Robertson ruled in November that Bin Laden driver Salim Ahmed Hamdan, 34, couldn't be tried before a military commission unless a competent tribunal decided he was not entitled to the protections given to prisoners of war under the Geneva Conventions.

Robertson also ruled Hamdan—who was Bin Laden's driver from 1996 to 2001 and is charged with transporting weapons to al-Qaida operatives—cannot be tried before a military tribunal unless the procedures conform to due process protections under the US Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Although the decision mentioned Hamdan, it effectively stalled all trials.

'Bad western'

"It's reminiscent of a bad western," said Hamdan's military-appointed defense lawyer, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Charlie Swift. "Prisoners are sitting in the jail before the judges come to town. Meanwhile, they're constructing the gallows."

Since the first 20 shackled and blindfolded prisoners arrived at the Guantanamo naval base on Jan. 11, 2002, the open-air pens at Camp X-Ray have been replaced by prefabricated cells at Camp Delta where the detainees can communicate with each other through steel-mesh doors.

About 50 prisoners are being held at Camp Five, a maximum security prison with a capacity for 100 prisoners of high intelligence value. Plans are under way for a similar $25 million (euro18.94 million) facility with a capacity for 200, Hood said. Pending congressional approval, the camera-equipped facility could reduce the number of troops needed and help segregate prisoners, Hood said.

Additions planned

Other additions planned are a $1.7 million (euro1.29 million) psychiatric wing to treat prisoners with mental illnesses—there have been 34 suicide attempts since the prison opened—and a $4 million (euro3 million) security fence that could reduce the need for 300 infantry troops.

A full-time, 324-member Military Police Internment and Resettlement Battalion will also replace a temporary, mostly reservist force at Guantanamo. Some of the soldiers will have experience in prisons such as Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, or guarding POWs, said Army Lt. Col. Kevin Burk, who will lead the unit. Some of the soldiers are already being trained.

About 200 prisoners have been released or transferred since the mission began, but most are still being held and some—such as five Moroccans—are on trial in their homelands.

Since the US Supreme Court ruled in June that Guantanamo prisoners can challenge their detentions in federal court, 69 Guantanamo detainees have filed 19 cases in US District Court challenging the legality of their detention as enemy combatants. Rulings are expected soon.

Outside of the courts, prisoners have a chance for release or transfer through two types of proceedings the government views as administrative. *AP*

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THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•100% soy ink•

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All wrong

EDITORIAL

THE TRIAL balloon that was the Romeo Jalosjos pardon seems to have fallen back to earth, deflated of its pretensions. Have justice and reason triumphed? We cannot be sure, because President Macapagal-Arroyo has not yet ruled the pardon out.

We must also never underestimate the resourcefulness of the wealthy and influential. Anything can yet happen, which is one reason to reiterate what we said last week. The proposed pardon for Jalosjos, the congressman from the Zamboanga peninsula convicted of statutory rape, is all wrong.

In the first place, he is not yet eligible for pardon. A convict meted out two life sentences, he must serve at least 15 years in prison before qualifying for the privilege. Secondly, the essentially political act of executive clemency carries enormous political risk for the President. Having wasted the political capital (she won from the May elections) through partisan appointments and lackluster performance, she risks losing even the little that is left.

Thirdly, pardon for Jalosjos assumes that the penal system has successfully rehabilitated him. In truth, the impact has been the other way around; Jalosjos, a wealthy politician with a vigorous political network, has undermined the system. His privileged quarters inside the prison are only the most visible sign of a zone of influence that extends beyond the maximum-security walls of the national penitentiary.

(Incidentally, the notion that pardoning Jalosjos is the Christian thing to do, as popularized by the likes of Rep. Ernesto Nieva, is a warped interpretation of Christianity. That it is an all-too-familiar argument does not make it any less warped. Forgiveness, the Christian faith teaches, comes to those who repent. Is Jalosjos the 21st-century equivalent of the prodigal son, whose guilt and remorse lead back to the father he has forsaken? To ask the question is to answer it.)

The first two reasons are intimately connected. If he is not yet eligible, then deeming him qualified is already an extra-legal and thus a political decision. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, a multiple-termer in Congress like Jalosjos, did not only raise the possibility of such an extraordinary decision; he correctly identified the President's option as necessarily a political act. That makes the grant of the pardon itself doubly political.

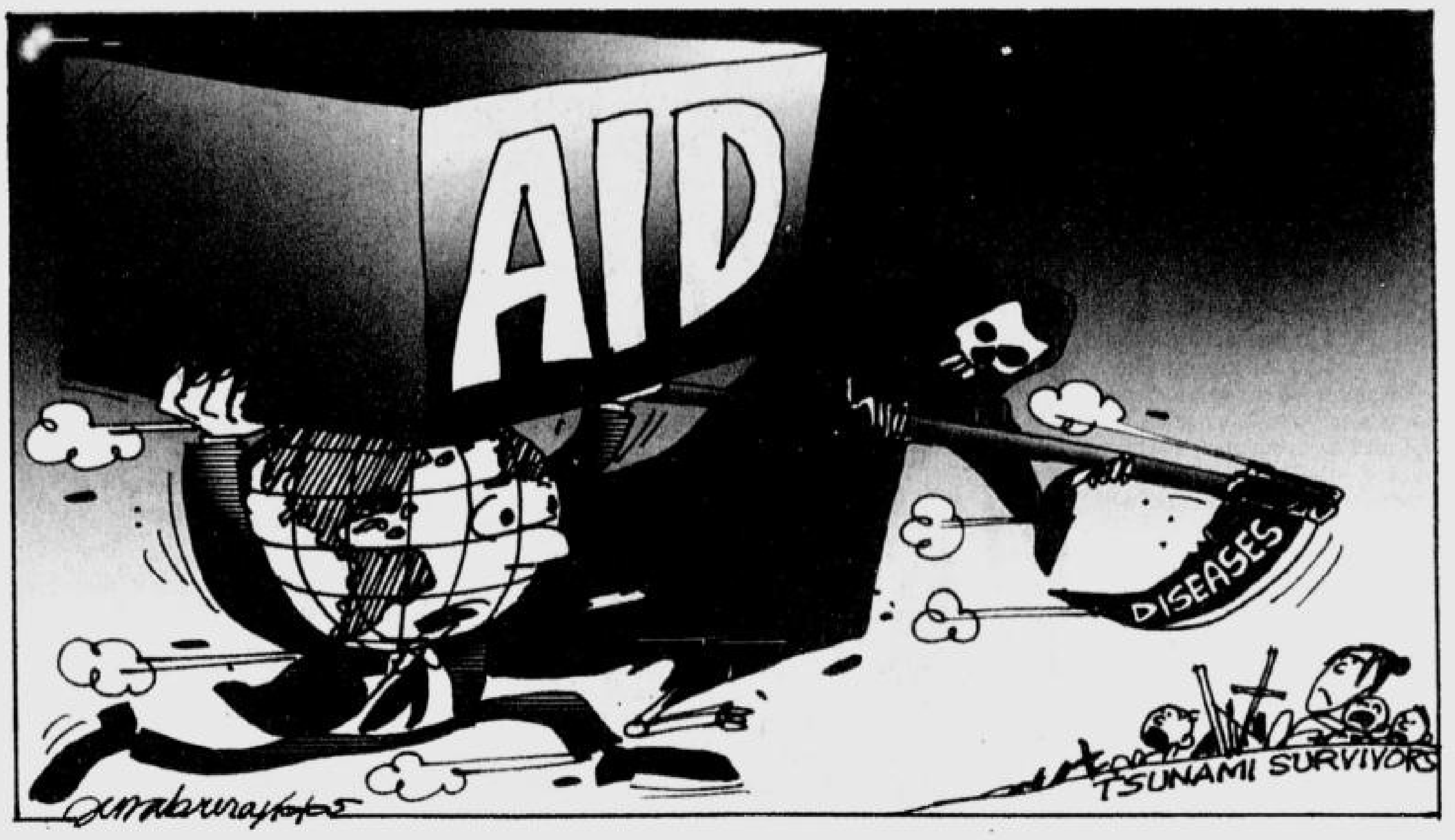
And then there is the fact that Jalosjos is an important political ally of the President; his political network gave her a wide margin of victory in its bailiwicks. That makes a Jalosjos pardon a political act three times over.

Can President Arroyo afford to play politics, during what she herself calls "the year of urgent change"? From the perspective of the national interest, there is nothing either urgent or change-related about the Jalosjos case. In truth, it represents a return to the same old, discredited ways of doing things. Thus, a Jalosjos pardon can only be a setback.

But perhaps the President is thinking of the support the pardon enjoys among many congressmen and local politicians. With a difficult legislative agenda to push, a presidential decision that warms congressmen's hearts and pleases local politicians on a gut level can be politically potent. Can the President afford *not* to play politics?

The answer is Yes. The President's task today is to finally leave partisan politics behind. In part, that means rising above the fray, addressing the public above the heads of congressmen. It also means cracking the whip on the House majority, regardless of the consequences. Paradoxically, it is by demonstrating political will over Congress that the President can regain her congressmen's confidence. She can disabuse them of the notion that she is a creature of Congress, a President with a million-vote mandate manufactured in the House.

She can attack these unspoken assumptions by taking Congress on in the Jalosjos case: This pardon may be dear to you; you may hold the opinion that all your unfortunate colleague really did was to get caught; but a pardon that reinforces public cynicism about politics and the administration of justice is a pardon we can all do without.



Don't waste those runaway logs

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE LOGS that were washed down the mountainsides during the last typhoon, killing hundreds of people and flattening entire villages in Infanta, (Quezon), and in Real and Nakar (Aurora), could cause more deaths if the government wouldn't do something about them immediately. A war is about to break out between the residents of the three towns and the workers of a sawmill over these logs littering the seashores and floating on the sea and river.

The residents are making them into charcoal while the workers of the sawmill are gathering them to be sawn into lumber. For the residents, who have lost their means of livelihood after their farms were covered with mud and their fishing boats carried away by the floods, charcoal-making is their only way to earn a living. The sawmill, they say, should not take away the logs as these were the same logs that killed their loved ones and neighbors and destroyed their homes. They also insist that the logs, whose ownership can no longer be traced, don't belong to the sawmill.

After causing so much death and destruction, the logs should now be public property. The loggers should not only apologize to the residents; they should be charged in court for the damage that they have wrought.

But the greedy sawmill wants the logs for its own use.

The government should step in before the war erupts. It should confiscate all the logs, set up its own sawmill near the beach, saw the logs into lumber, give the lumber to the residents for them to use in rebuilding their homes; the remnants to be made into charcoal. The government should employ as many jobless residents as possible to gather the logs and to work in the sawmill.

Making whole logs into charcoal—which is what the residents are doing—is wasting a finite natural resource. Sawing them into lumber (only what is left should be made into charcoal) is the better alternative. Even the sawdust can be processed into charcoal bricks. Some of the lumber can be sold to fill the needs of the construction industry so that no new trees will have to be cut down.

But the lumber-sawing should not be done by the private sawmill. They no longer have any right to these logs. It would be an insult to the residents to deprive them of the use of the wood from these logs, after the logs have destroyed their homes and killed their loved ones.

The government should be the one to exercise ownership over the logs. And it should file charges against the loggers. But the government is not even moving in that direction. What is Environment Secretary Mike Defensor doing?

There's smoke day and night rising from the hundreds of charcoal kilns on the beaches of Infanta, Real and Nakar. Sacks of charcoal line the roads; they are being sold at bargain prices. Charcoal-making is the only means of livelihood of the people there. They need the help of the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo—help that comes not only in the form of press releases, speeches, visits to the disaster areas or relief goods distribution; but real help in action, help that enables the people to rebuild their lives.

First, they have to have homes. And the building materials are there, scattered all over the place. They just have to be sawn into lumber.

Next, the people need jobs. Most of the people are farmers and fishermen. But they cannot for now farm because their fields are covered with mud, and they cannot go fishing because they have lost their boats.

So the people have turned to charcoal-making (polluting their own air), wasting precious wood that can be put to better use for the construction of their homes.

The Bureau of Agricultural Extension should teach and help the farmers to rehabilitate their fields and the Bureau of Fisheries should lend the fishermen funds with which to buy new boats. Meanwhile the Department of Environment and Natural Resources should give them jobs in the sawmill, in the gathering of logs and in the construction of new homes. GMA should not only pay lip service to helping the poor. She should do something concrete to help them.

She went to Indonesia to hobnob with world leaders and had her picture taken with them as they discussed ways of helping the victims of the tsunamis. But our President has forgotten her countrymen who were also victims of a natural disaster that was just as deadly.

* * *

The Metro Manila Development Authority will set up "loading bays" for buses along Edsa in another attempt to ease the traffic on this thoroughfare. "Loading bay" is just another name for "bus terminal," where buses will wait while they are not needed. They will be dispatched as passengers need them. That way they will not clog the whole Edsa as they wait for and pick up a few passengers.

Our problem in Metro Manila is that there is an overpopulation of vehicles, and the big lumbering buses that are not needed take up most of the street space. The Department of Transportation and Communication went overboard in encouraging operators to buy and field more buses—even giving out loans for the purpose—back when there was a shortage of public utility vehicles plying Edsa. But the DOTC did not know when to say "Stop." Now there are too many buses and there are not enough passengers to fill them. If DOTC officials will only get out of their air-conditioned offices, they will see the hordes of buses, with hardly any passengers, lined up bumper-to-bumper, wasting precious fuel and dollars that we pay to buy the oil. It is time to cull the excess buses.

(To be continued)

Disaster

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

A COUPLE of days before the crisis summit of world leaders in Indonesia, George W. Bush announced he was in the thick of a campaign to raise aid for the tsunami victims. Toward that end, he said, he had appointed the last two former presidents, his father George Bush and immediate predecessor Bill Clinton, to lead the effort to collect private donations. Bush urged Americans to help. "In this situation, cash donations are most useful, and I've asked the former presidents to solicit contributions both large and small."

Clinton added: "Between public and private commitments now, we're up to about $3 billion."

Well, it's good that the United States has joined the world in trying to defuse what the United Nations calls the worst humanitarian crisis ever in modern times. The magnitude of the devastation is mind-boggling, and so is the scale of relief work that needs to be done to overcome it. Better late than never. But Bush's strenuous effort to raise funds for the victims of the disaster merely draws attention to the things he can easily do—to help not just the current victims but the future ones as well; the latter, by making sure they do not become so at all.

The first, and most obvious, is to cut down on arms spending. Nothing more shows the epic scale of human folly than that hunger and deprivation persist amid the wanton waste of precious resources, which is deliberately done simply to increase the destructive capabilities of nations, America's above all. The human species is the most intelligent among the species ever to walk this earth, yet it is at the same time the dumbest. Some members of the species more than others, the current US president chief among the latter.

Compare the $3 billion three American presidents together have so far raised from public and private American sources with this: the world spends the most for arms, currently $950 billion per year. The figures for seven years ago, 1998, show the kind of skewed priorities we have. That year, the world spent $780 billion for arms and $13 billion for basic health and nutrition for everyone in the world. The lowest item in the rung was basic education for everyone in the world, which was only $6 billion. Americans and Europeans spent more to feed their pets—$17 billion—than they did to give water to the thirsty; expenditure for water and sanitation for everyone in the world was only $9 billion.

The United States accounts for close to one-half of the world's arms expenditure.

The US military request for 2005 is $420.7 billion. Last year, its budget was $399.1 billion and the year before that, $396.1 billion. It is 29 times bigger than the combined spending for arms of all the "rogue countries" (Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria), which is $14.4 billion. That is certainly more than 29 times bigger than the combined spending of the UN and all its agencies, which is $10 billion. All this while the UN faced a financial crisis over the past decade and was forced to cut back on its humanitarian work because members have not paid their dues, the United States chief of them: it owes the UN $762 million, nearly half (48 percent) of standing dues ($1.6 billion).

Last year in a televised speech, Bush said he was seeking $87 billion for Iraq, a sum to be used to put down all resistance to the most brazen act of occupation to have taken place in postcolonial times.

He wants to help? Easy. Get out of Iraq and cut back on arms.

The second is just as easy. At least from a rational perspective, which is, however, the perspective that George W seems resolved to fight to the bitter end. That is for him to sign the Kyoto Protocol. The Kyoto Protocol puts into action the recommendations of the Rio Summit of 1992, notably the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2012 to levels 5 percent below 1990. The industrialized countries, chiefly the United States, account for 55 percent of those emissions. Last November, Russia, one of the last holdouts, signed the Protocol, leaving only the United States and Australia out in the cold. The greenhouse gas emissions are believed to be the single biggest cause of global warming over the last couple of decades. Scientists predict that as global warming worsens, we will see tsunamis regularly engulfing various parts of the world.

In 1992, George W's father rejected the Rio Summit. Ten years later, in 2002, George W not only did not attend the Johannesburg meeting, he tried to block the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. Mark Townsend explains why: "An estimated 5,000 pro-business lobbyists, led by US interests, chorused the message that the status quo is adequate. A leaked letter to President George Bush, signed by 31 groups, including Republican Party lobbyists, some of them linked to oil giant Exxon Mobil, warned that such issues could prove destructive to domestic interests."

At Johannesburg, the US delegation also fought the European proposal to generate energy from renewable sources such as the sun, sea and wind. According to the UN, the US consumption of energy has jumped 21 percent and its greenhouse gas emissions have gone up 13 percent in the last 10 years.

Bush wants to help? Easy. Sign the Kyoto Protocol and join the rest of the world in saving the planet. That way, there won't be many more victims of tsunamis to help.

Some years ago, I recall someone complaining that the youth of today were crazy to latch on to the word of rock stars rather than public officials. Well, when rock stars unite to raise money for victims of natural disasters, they manage to make waves. When public officials gather to decide the fate of the world, they manage only to make tsunamis. No, the youth are perfectly sane. Amid the cacophony or racket or rock and rap, they can still tell music from noise.

Wisdom from Pagsanghan

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE SENATE, voting 13-2 last Friday, in a special session, passed the "lateral attrition bill," which Malacañang prefers to call the "Accountability Reform Bill." The House of Representatives had passed its version a month ago and the two versions are expected to be reconciled in a bicameral session today, with the final version to be signed into law tomorrow by the President. Principally authored in the Senate by Sen. Ralph Recto, the bill provides for a system of reward and punishment for the personnel of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, the principal tax-collection agencies of the government. The aim is to encourage them to "vacuum-clean," as Recto put it, all uncollected revenues, in the light of reports that at least P50 billion in tax duties is lost yearly to smuggling, and at least P200 billion to tax leakages. The House version wants to include other revenue-generating offices, but the likelihood is that the final version will cover only the BIR and Customs.

The lateral attrition bill provides that if the BIR and Customs exceed their revenue targets, their officials and employees will be entitled to a percentage of the collection as incentives, and this could go up to 40 percent. But should they fail to meet the collection targets, the personnel of the responsible division may be terminated from service; the termination, however, may be appealed to a revenue performance evaluation board, chaired by the finance secretary.

* * *

Sen. Aquilino Pimentel, one of the two senators who voted against the proposed law (the other was Alfredo Lim), asked why government employees have to be rewarded for merely doing their jobs. Recently at a social function, I got the opinion of a career BIR official whom I have known from way, way back. She said the bill has contributed to demoralization in the BIR. In the first place, she explained, it is the executive branch which sets the revenue targets without consulting the BIR people. Given the financial condition of the government, the targets are set quite high. The problem, she said, is that the existing business atmosphere is not good—a number of businesses have folded up while some are just trying to survive. Thus, she said, no matter how hard the BIR people work, it will not follow that the collection will go up. Now comes this bill that would punish them if they failed to meet the targets. I saw her point about demoralization.

* * *

The government is under tremendous pressure to keep the budget deficit in check, and as economist Bernardo Villegas pointed out in a recent speech, there are two ways to do this. One is to trim down the deficit incurred principally by the government-owned and -controlled corporations; and the other is to increase tax revenues. Villegas noted that the budget deficit was kept under control in 2003 (P199.9 billion versus P210.7 billion in 2002), thanks to a modest increase in tax revenues. He opined that the heads of the BIR and Customs are doing "a good job" raising the "tax revenue effort ratio" from 13.2 percent of GDP in 2002 to 14 percent in 2003. But he conceded that it will require "sustained efforts and pertinacity" on their part to bring back the ratio to where it was during the Ramos administration—at 17 percent of GDP. He also conceded that although it's an "exaggeration" to compare our situation to Argentina's, there is reason for anxiety, because the our country's debt-to-GDP ratio has already exceeded the "prudent level" of 70 percent. By June 2003, it was at 71 percent.

* * *

As the old year drew to a close—amid the human misery caused by the mind-boggling natural calamities that struck our country and other parts of South Asia, and amid the problems in the economy and governance—Cecile Alvarez and I searched for a radio guest who could give a perspective of hope and optimism. We couldn't have found a better spokesperson than Ateneo High School Prof. Onofre Pagsanghan. A contemporary of my eldest brother Rudy Olivares at the old Ateneo, he was the humanities teacher of my brother Roger at its 1-A honors section and, a generation later, of my son Buddy. In a few years, some of my grand-nephews would also fall under his tutelage. As an institution in 1-A for the past 53 years and as founder of the theater group Dulaang Sibol, he has tutored thousands of young people in the humanities, some of them he's quite proud of. Pagsi, in his early 70s, said with a smile that he has no intention of slowing down.

* * *

Can the Filipino overcome, we asked him. In the next 45 minutes, through music, poetry and lecture, he assured us: by all means, *kaya natin ito*, but change has to come from within ourselves first. He sang the well-known song by Michael Jackson, called "The Man in the Mirror":

"I'm starting with the man in the mirror,
I'm asking him to change his ways.
If you want to make this a better place
Take a look at yourself and make the change."

Then he recited a 28-syllable "*tanaga*" composed by a first-year high school student of his, which goes like this:

"Masdan mo ang kalaban;
Masda't titingin-tingin.
Masdan mo ang kalaban,
Nandiyan sa salamin."

Pagsi opined that as a people we need to work and pull together and get away from our crab mentality. And to his mind, the best medium for promoting change is the art form that he and Cecile know best—the theater. He said that no one person can stage a play by himself, no matter how big a star he is; and that every minute of stage work involves at least four or five hours of preparation. The secret, says Pagsi, is to prepare through hard work—it's 90 percent perspiration and 10 percent inspiration.

From Dumoy to the world

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

THE DUMOY fresh water is probably one of the best in the world. Ask any Davaoeño and he will proudly attest to this without any hint of exaggeration. Dumoy, a suburban community situated along the southern coastal area of Davao City's Talomo District, is sitting on an aquifer whose source of water is traced to the bosom of Mt. Apo, the country's highest peak.

Experts say that through the process of natural filtration, millions of gallons of rainwater collected in the aquifer have been filtered "crystal clean" beneath the earth's surface by molten rocks and other elements spewed by volcanic eruptions in the past.

"That's the reason why the water in Dumoy tastes pure, fresh and good. It has no foul-smell; its quality is one of the best in the world," said Dominador Lopez Jr., an executive of the Davao City Water District (DCWD).

Indeed, the so-called Dumoy water is more than a source of pride for Davaoeños. Because of its "sweet water," the Dumoy area is now bustling with commercial activities and is considered one of the city's major economic hubs. Companies that produce soft drinks, juices, sauces, ice, bottled water and others have set up their plants in the area.

Many DCWD deep wells providing the fresh and potable water needs of Davao City are also situated in Dumoy.

However, last New Year's Eve, something happened that tarnished Dumoy's fame. As its residents were preparing to greet New Year's Day—again without the firecrackers and fireworks as in the past years—several police cars and ambulances, sirens wailing, were seen racing toward a warehouse located along the national highway. It turned out later that the police had raided a shabu factory right in the heart of Dumoy.

There was a shootout between the police and members of a syndicate operating the warehouse, resulting in the death of six—still unidentified—Chinese-looking men. Also recovered were 76 kilos of shabu worth P152 million. The shabu factory, anti-narcotics officials claimed, was capable of producing at least 150 kilos of shabu weekly. One anti-narcotics operative also claimed that the factory could produce "high grade and export quality" shabu because of the quality of water that Dumoy offers.

A fuming Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, who arrived at the scene after the raid together with ranking police and anti-narcotics officials, was overheard saying: "I told you not to f__k around in my city! You are destroying my nation, we will destroy you."

During his TV Sunday program following the raid, Duterte was still visibly furious declaring that "drug lords are garbage and I will dispose of them like garbage."

The shocking discovery of a drug laboratory in the city was an affront to the tough-talking mayor.

However, it may turn out to be just the tip of the iceberg. Several legally registered warehouses that were also raided by the authorities during the follow-up operations turned out to be fronts of a drug syndicate allegedly led by one Allan Sy, who remains at large. Apparently, the warehouse that was raided was not just an ordinary shabu factory put up to supply the local market. Authorities, including officials of the US Drug Enforcement Agency, link its financiers and operators to international drug rings, like the Chinese Triad.

The Dumoy factory could have been one of the sources of shabu exported for global distribution. This is not improbable: just a few kilometers away from the busted factory is the Davao City Fish Port in Toril District, which has long been suspected as a transshipment point for illegal drugs.

Undeniably, the Dumoy drug bust shocked many Davao residents. It is as if some chemicals had left a bad, if burning, taste in the mouth and have suddenly contaminated Dumoy's "pure and fresh water."

The public's disbelief, probably stems from the fact that the Duterte administration is known for its policy of "tough peace and order campaign" and for "hitting hard" on criminals, especially those involved in drugs. Also, following the March and April 2003 airport and seaport bombings, the military has become visible in the heart of Davao City, beefing up the local police force. On top of that, there has been no letup in the killing of suspected criminals allegedly by the so-called Davao Death Squad, which was credited with almost a hundred hits last year. Last week alone, seven people were killed vigilante-style by motorcycle-riding gunmen. In this environment, who in his right mind would have ever thought of setting up a shabu factory in Davao City?

Probably, the drug syndicate thought that the best place where they could operate a shabu factory would be a place that no one in his right mind would ever choose as a site for such a factory. And, judging from the evidence so far disclosed to the court and the media, the drug syndicate could not have established its laboratory in Davao City without the help of a wide network of contacts, both in the government and private sector. Unmasking these contacts and prosecuting them would be a big challenge, as in the past. For it would be wishful thinking to believe that we can stop the proliferation of illegal drugs by allowing members of drug syndicates to escape from detention or to go scot-free through legal technicalities; or by "terminating them with extreme prejudice" or, worse, by promoting or electing them into office.

Zoo stories

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

HERE'S a story narrated to me by my father when I was still in short pants.

His sister once brought her eldest son—then very, very young—to the zoo. They went around, and she would tell him the names of all the animals. When they reached the hippopotamus enclosure, my aunt told her son. "'Yan ay hipopótamo."

"Hipopóta ko, Mami?"

"Hinde. Hipopótamo," corrected my aunt, pointing to the beast.

"Ah, Hipopóta natin, Mami?"

End of story.

I don't remember when I first went to the Manila Zoo, but I do remember the second—and the last—time I was there. In both instances I was with my father. I remember the Manila Zoo hippo very well. It looked like it had a bad case of eczema. Extremely depressed-looking, it wallowed in a pond of what appeared like Pasig River water, on which floated a couple of triangular juice-drink containers, several candy wrappers, and what must have been another wrapper already bleached by the sun. If the poor thing's still alive today, scientists should study its amazing survival skills.

Actually, all the animals in the zoo, from what I can remember, wore a range of expressions—from total apathy at best, to a more general sort of grim fatalism (in the worst cases), to a look of suicidal desperation almost similar to the one homicidal maniacs take on shortly before they go on a rampage. The only animals that looked relatively contented were the giant crocodiles who basked in the sun with open mouths.

Oh, if those beasts in the zoo could speak, they'd probably sound like Didagen Dilangalen after a bad week at the House of Representatives.

If you want to get a good idea of what being imprisoned in the Manila Zoo does to animals, you should ask Filipinos of a certain age about the famous Spitting Monkey. He was all by his lonesome inside a large enclosure similar to a birdcage, either fussing about with his stools or glaring at people. There were large signs attached to the cage, warning visitors to keep away because the monkey liked to "manhandle" people—and to spit at them. Apparently, he liked grabbing unwary children who strayed too close—perhaps, to avenge the poor hippo's having to live in a mini Smoky Mountain, as an act of solidarity—I don't know. Naturally, upon being informed by their parents of what the sign said, the children would try to be sly and creep up to the cage, and then run back to mommy or daddy screaming with delight. (I guess if the monkey had been able to spit on the kids, or had shaken them up, they wouldn't have been so gleeful.) Alas, the last time I saw the monkey, it was in a peaceful mood.

I've always detested monkeys, but there was one monkey who really made me laugh. I wish I knew what kind of monkey it was. My dad pointed out that it looked like the Ayatollah Khomenei, and it did: a rather sour Ayatollah at that. We must've stayed in front of the cage for 10 minutes or more, just cracking up.

A decade later, about 1994, I think, I went with some friends to the "mini-zoo" at Glico's at the Glorietta, which was quite the rage then—boyfriends would even take their girlfriends there as a "cute" prelude to a date. If the Manila Zoo smelt bad, looked sad and exuded the air of a concentration camp, Glico's had the atmosphere of (I would guess) a Singaporean detention facility: spotless, clinical, obsessively organized and just as devoid of freedom. The advantage of Glico's was that its animals looked well-fed.

There was a little "petting zoo" at the time (and no, I'm sure this wasn't the reason for the zoo's popularity with lovers—you're taking the power of subliminal suggestion too far). There was a sheep in a pen so small the animal couldn't have turned around if it wanted to. There was a calf in a tiny (for cows, that is) corral. Some chickens and ducks were kept in a little enclosure too, and looked uneasy in each other's company. You could, if you wanted to, buy a little hay or feed and give them to the animals. I still felt sorry for the animals but, later on, when I met the owner of the mini-zoo (who later on moved his creatures to Goldcrest where he set up the Quest science museum, now long gone), I learned that the animals weren't kept there too long; and so I would assume that the poor calf must be enjoying the sun in some field now, with his friends, while the poor Manila Zoo animals soldier on, like prisoners of war, with no hope of release.

Today's Manila Zoo was apparently founded by Arsenio Lacson, and its site represents the last surviving patch of a much bigger pre-war public park. The origins of the zoo are explained in the "Streets of Manila," where there's this tidbit: "During the American period [Jardin Botanico, the Royal Botanical Garden of Manila by decree of Governor General Norzagaray in 1858] … was known as the Mehan Gardens, named, in 1913, after an American sanitation chief, John C. Mehan. Up to 1941 it served as the city's botanical garden and zoo (until the animals, including a young elephant named Goyo, died of malnutrition during the Japanese Occupation)."

* * *

READER Ben Vallejo has these comments on my last column: "I have to disagree with you. Many Filipinos are not detached [from] the sea. Probably the city slickers are, but as a marine scientist, I know that fisherfolk are [as] concerned [in] conserving the seas as you and I are.

"What drives them to destructive fishing practices is poverty. They know that education may give their kids a chance to escape [from poverty] but who can get a good education now? Probably, only the rich can.

"But there is good news. Our coastal people have started to conserve their own resources."

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Footnote to Evita

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—Will Imelda Marcos live to be 85? That should only be a decade away. How will history judge her? Will there be a national monument or statue in her honor? Maybe some kind of rock opera that will be called "The Iron Butterfly"? Will her life be extolled in commercial tours? Will she be remembered as someone who championed the poor?

These thoughts raced through my brain as our guide in this obligatory city tour of Buenos Aires pointed to a life-size monument recently put up opposite the National Library in the Palermo district.

"I guess," our young guide started her packaged lecture, "in the case of Eva Peron, there are only two ways of looking at her—people either love her or hate her." She didn't put that observation in the past tense, which led me to think that 52 years after Eva Peron's death, this controversial woman who dominated the '50s as "Santa Evita" is still an object of popular attention. "She is being commemorated for her fight for the rights of women and the poor," our guide continued.

Eva Peron would be 85 if she were alive today. A product of the "*pampas*" (Argentine grassy plains), she was an illegitimate child known as Eva Maria Ibarguren. She took the name of her mother because her natural father, who had a legitimate first family, denied her his surname (Duarte). Eva, who was only 7 when her father died, was barred together with her mother and four other siblings from his funeral. They just wanted to see their father for the last time. The theory was this must have been so traumatic for her that she carried the pain throughout her life. She did not have any schooling after her 12th year. But she did use the name Eva Duarte later in life.

At 15, Eva moved to Buenos Aires, where she led a socially, if not sexually, active life. Imelda used to blister at being compared with Eva Peron, saying with extreme outrage, "I was never a prostitute!"

And probably neither was Evita. Her detractors in Buenos Aires obviously spread the gossip that "she slept her way through movie fame." Actually, she never made it as a movie star. She did mostly minor parts. But her speaking voice was good enough for radio and she became a famous "radio actress." She also mingled with artists and actually tried her hand at trade unionism on their behalf. But it was her radio program, dubbed "Towards a Better Future," that attracted attention, including that of a military officer by the name of Juan Domingo Peron, who later became the president of Argentina. Evita would later marry the future president, notwithstanding their age difference—he was 24 years her senior.

Our guide, trying hard to be objective but obviously holding some sympathy for Evita, said, "The issue is not whether she was a prostitute or not." I thought that was a reasonable proposition. "She is or should be remembered for what she did for the poor, getting them hospital and other health benefits. She fought for better wages for the workers. And women voted for the first time due to her efforts."

The next item on the tour was the Plaza de Mayo, "the center of gravity" in Buenos Aires. It was here that the "mythic Evita" took political shape. The pink-colored Government House balcony became her favorite spot, delivering her rousing speeches to the poor and lower classes. She played to their worst fears and asked for their support to join a social movement that would give them better wages and working conditions. The word Peronism or Peronismo began to take root as the vehicle for this social revolution. Exploiting the grievances of the poor, Peron and Evita began to promote a populist movement and the need for broad-based coalitions among the working classes, unions and organized labor. Based on personal appeal and populist ideals, Peronism grew tremendously over the years and soon encompassed the largest part of the popular sector in Argentina. Peron had extraordinary tactical and personal skills. But over time, different currents and tendencies in the movement emerged. According to Guillermo O'Donnell, an expert on Latin America, Peronism grew enormously complex and "never acquired any real institutional structure." The reasons for this evolution of the movement are just as complex, and will not be explained in this limited space.

Meanwhile, Peron and Evita at the heyday of their power accumulated quite a sizable personal fortune. The Eva Peron Foundation, it was later revealed, had as much as $700 million in 1970, equivalent to the total assets of the Rockefeller Foundation at the time. It is not known how much the Argentine government has recovered from the reported assets of the foundation in Swiss banks. This sounds all too familiar to Filipinos and needs no further explanation.

But death probably has a way of revising history to make it kinder. Evita seems to have been "rehabilitated," and maybe even more idolized in death. We passed by the Eva Peron Foundation building, which is now the University of Engineering. At least it's not the University of Life. There is also the General Labour Union building, where the vigil for her mortal remains was held in 1952. The tour also took us to the Luna Park, the place where Evita first met Peron. Then we were shown the Four Seasons Hotel where Madonna stayed when she was in Argentina to play Evita in a movie directed by Alan Parker. Madonna would play opposite Jonathan Pryce as Juan Peron. But the supporters of Evita, still a formidable force in Argentina, picketed the hotel forcing the cast to move to another hotel. When I asked our guide why that was, she said that Argentinians just couldn't bear the thought of someone like Madonna playing the role of their revered icon Santa Evita. This had the effect, of course, of making me want to see the movie out of curiosity.

On my way back from the tour, I picked up a book written by an obvious admirer by the name of Mario Granero. It ends with: "Fifty years have elapsed and Eva Peron has become a myth.....She is now much more than politics and social conflicts. She is Argentine history."

Surely, Evita is not turning in her grave.

Belinda A. Aquino, University of Hawaii professor and director of the Center for Philippine Studies, is spending part of her sabbatical leave in Latin America.

THEY SAID

Education flaw

"What is the use of having a good student in engineering, in English, in social science, if there is something wrong in his character?"

—Lt. Gen. Crisolito Balaoing on revising the curriculum of the Philippine Military Academy

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Debt service benefits?

THE WAY the government talks, it is as if we, Filipinos, have all the reasons to celebrate the "sin taxes" and new tax burdens. This government actuation adds insult to injury and practically demeans Filipinos on the morbid assumption that they are masochists.

We are the ones who will shoulder these taxes. And these taxes will be used by the government to pay our creditors, foreign and domestic. In addition, we are made to pay the debt of the National Power Corp. through our power bills. Through the same power bills, we also pay—thanks to President Fidel V. Ramos—the independent power producers for overpriced and, in some cases, undelivered, or even unproduced power.

The government also makes it appear that paying for our debt and the interests thereon is for our benefit. Why? Because, the argument goes, if they are not paid, we would be in default. Which would mean our debt-dependent government could not borrow more. Which would lead to a financial collapse.

But the rush to impose and collect more taxes overlooks—not deliberately, I hope—the already prostrate and incendiary condition of our people. Even before the recent oil, power, water, food and fare price increases, the World Bank reported that 40 percent of Filipinos live on $2 or less a day; another 12 percent of them on $1 or less a day. Will siphoning off billions of pesos—P15 billion a year through the new sin tax law alone—and turning them over to our creditors not aggravate beyond imagination the people's hunger? Are we not driving large masses of people deeper into hunger to avoid defaulting on debt service?

Examined closely, the P3.6 trillion national debt has benefited not the Filipino people but the WB and the International Monetary Fund and their clients, the transnational corporations. Through the conditions attached to the loans, the WB and the IMF have been able to bring about the structural transformation designed to deliver our economy to the transnational corporations. The decision of the Supreme Court constitutionalizing the Mining Act of 1995 is the latest step toward the completion of the delivery.

After borrowing P3.6 trillion, 90 percent of Filipinos have become poorer and more hopeless than they were before 1962, the year we began borrowing under the loan conditions imposed by the WB-IMF.

Instead of squeezing our people's lifeblood to the limit through taxation, why doesn't the government mobilize our own resources, not to service our costly debt but to develop the competitive muscles of our economy, as was done by Asia's tiger economies? Let the WB-IMF support this effort instead of threatening us with the consequences of default on our debt service. It is in our creditors' interest—and ours—to keep our economy afloat.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square Condominium,
145 15th Avenue, Cubao, QC

Alternative tourist destinations

FOLLOWING the tsunami tragedy that devastated most of Southeast Asia's favorite tourist destinations, there will be a major shift in the flow of tourists in Asia where the warm tropical sun, white beaches and shopping adventures beckon and lure western-hemisphere's winter travelers.

The Philippines, by virtue of its geographical location, is in the heart of the expected tourist destination shift. Are our people, businessmen, government and the tourist-related industries ready, willing and able to face up to the challenge of accommodating tourists without taking advantage of them? The spin-off industries of tourism are manifold and they can generate more than enough revenues to rescue us from our present financial crisis and sustain our economy in the future.

The Arroyo administration, particularly the Philippine National Police and the military, are urgently challenged to provide security and safety measures to tourists; the tourist industry, to spread the red carpet to our visitors; the political brats, to desist from "trouble-mongering"; and our people, to show the traditional Filipino hospitality to our guests. Together, we can hopefully make tourism the prime long-term revenue earner of our economy. We must not put a providential economic opportunity to waste.

—FRUCTUOSO SUZARA,
executive director,
Social Policy Advocacy
& Research Consultants,
15 Charleyville, White Plains, QC

Water in a desert

CONRADO de Quiros' column, titled "Silence," (PDI, 12/29/04) is a gem. In this age of "information overload," words of insight and inspiration are drops of water in a desert. In the rush of everyday life, people indeed seldom find time, if at all, to reflect on things De Quiros writes about.

I'm grateful that De Quiros has the time. I agree with what he said, communication without silence is a dead-end street, it goes nowhere, and arrives at no mutual understanding and respect.

Learning to listen with our heart, putting aside our own thoughts and judgments in order to fully understand the other—how often in a day do we really do these?

Thanks, again, Mr. De Quiros. Please write more. How I wish you had put out instead the long version of your article. In any case, I will keep on listening.

—ANNETTE PELKMANS-BALAOING,
euroscope@hetnet.nl

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Praying for all victims, thankful for all survivors

THE PHOTOGRAPH that appeared on the Dec. 29, 2004 issue of the INQUIRER showed an Indian woman lying on bare ground and screaming her grief-stricken heart out.

I can accept photos of people dragging themselves or their belongings through the ruins of their homes, searching for their loved ones. But this is a woman in mourning, someone's mother, sister or friend. By putting her photo on the front page of one of the most popular newspapers in the country, the INQUIRER has made her grief and her pain public.

It's simply my opinion that mourning should be kept within family and friends, in a private setting. (Except for people who have touched the lives of millions, such as Fernando Poe Jr. and Diana, Princess of Wales.) She should have been allowed to mourn with the luxury of privacy, which might have been the only luxury she has left.

Maybe the publication of her photo was for the best. Maybe some of her relatives were looking for her and, with the photo out in the newspapers, found her quickly. Maybe someone will offer her help in burying the remains of her loved one(s), in getting a new home and starting a new life.

Whoever the woman is, I hope she is now with her family, safe and comforted. And I hope whoever comes across her picture will offer a silent prayer for all the victims of the tragedy, and be thankful for all the survivors.

—RIEGELE F. ARCEO,
32-F Liberty Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Roads, walls and democracy

THE LONG-TERM solution to Metro Manila's traffic is to develop the countryside. People only flock to the city because the jobs and economic opportunities are perceived to be better here.

It will take years before the mass transport system can be improved. The government must reconsider an earlier proposal to ask private subdivisions to open their gates to traffic. These are hard times and everyone must contribute to solving the country's woes.

The poor have always been coerced, bribed and even attacked to give up some of their rights in order to make way for road-widening or the construction of an overpass. Working class communities are demolished just to provide access roads to a new business center or mall.

But it seems government engineers consciously spare residents of gated communities from the trauma of being uprooted from their homes. They would rather disturb the little people who could be persuaded by money or guns; anyway they would not think of filing charges in courts.

Thus, residents of Guadalupe, Makati, especially along Kalayaan Avenue, were forced to adapt to the phenomenal increase of vehicular traffic in their area because bigger roads had to be constructed as shortcuts to C-5, Pateros and an alternative road to Edsa. Some houses were demolished to pave the way for the construction of a road leading to Fort Bonifacio Global City.

Meanwhile, residents of the nearby Forbes Park can sleep peacefully in their homes as they are assured the government would not dare allow their community to be used as an entry point to C-5, Pateros or Fort Bonifacio.

The public is willing to help in easing the traffic. But the government's solution must also be socially just. If the government can bulldoze its way into the heart of urban poor communities, dismantling basketball courts, clearing sidewalk of vendors and demolishing houses, why can't it ask the old elite and the nouveau riche in private subdivisions to sacrifice a little of their divine right to privacy to help solve, at least for the time being, the metro traffic?

Residents of Barangay Pitogo and Pinagkaisahan are law-abiding citizens, if not more honest taxpayers, than their neighbors in Forbes Park yet their children will have to grow up dodging cars and vans as their once quiet neighborhood is suddenly transformed into a noisy beehive of gas-fuming vehicles trying to escape the hellish traffic on Edsa.

Walls that separate rich and poor reflect the inequality in our society. Walls symbolize pomposity, rigid attitude and fear of outsiders; in our case, fear of the dirty dumb poor.

Residents of Forbes Park, Dasmariñas Village and other plush communities must open their gates to the public.

The moment the walls are dismantled, we can hope for some change. Then we can talk of democracy.

—RAYMOND PALATINO,
vice president,
Anak ng Bayan Youth Party,
32A Visayan Ave.,
Galas, Quezon City

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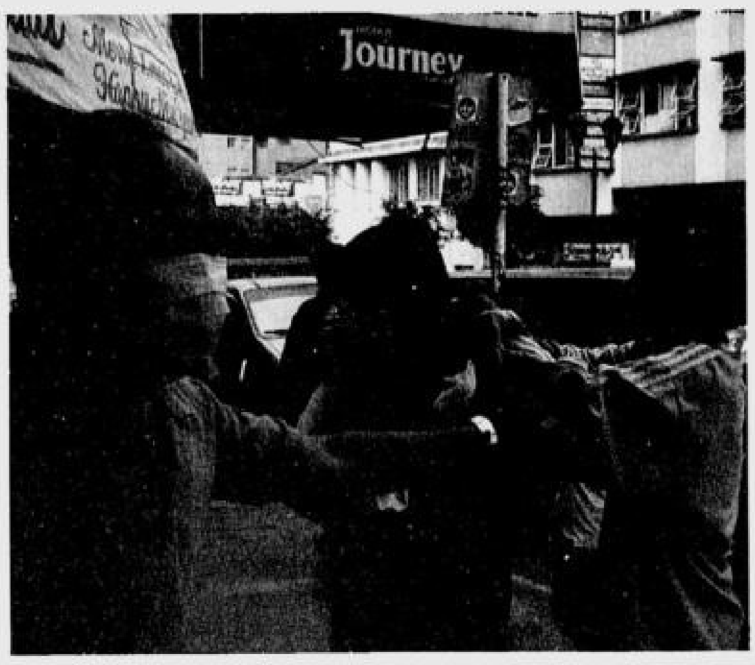
'Praningococcemia' irks Baguio residents



BAGUIO residents take advantage of a super sale of surgical masks at the city's central district. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The deadly meningococcemia has mutated into a new social variant, "praningococcemia."

Coined from the word *"praning"* or street speak for "paranoid," it is manifested by the brisk sales of surgical masks and antibiotics in the city to fight off the fatal meningitis strain.

"Praningococcemia" is also manifested by the discrimination felt by Baguio residents and even recent visitors to the city.

"Praningococcemia" irked not only Baguio residents but also members of the newly created meningococcemia command post set up by the World Health Organization, Department of Health and the city epidemiological surveillance unit.

"Not all cases should be attributed or traced to Baguio. There will always be other cases in other parts of the Philippines," said Dr. Luningning Villa, spokesperson of the command post and program manager of the emerging and reemerging infectious unit of the DOH's National Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

Villa said cases of meningococcemia are usually sporadic. She said it is a fairly common form of bacterial infection.

The Philippines, she said, recorded 50 to 120 cases of meningococcemia yearly in the past five years.

The last time the country had an abnormal number of meningococcal infection was in 1994 when there were 240 cases all over the country.

"Since we assessed that there were 39 meningococcal cases in the city and its vicinity, there should be 50 to 80 more cases in other places," she said.

Dr. Hitoshi Oshitani, WHO regional adviser for communicable disease surveillance and response, agreed with Villa.

"It is not a rare incident. It is very common in other areas in the region," Oshitani said of the meningococcemia situation in Baguio.

"Meningococcemia is an endemic disease not only here but in other countries," he added.

This assurance from WHO came after Baguio residents complained to local and national TV and radio networks about being isolated in buses and airplanes.

Even health personnel with suspected meningococcemia patients outside Baguio take pains to trace any connection with the city.

A relative of a meningococcemia patient in Antipolo last November even said on TV that a Baguio resident might have bought from the store tended by the victim's family.

Metro Manila residents were also interviewed on TV saying they were afraid to touch vegetables and flowers from Baguio and Benguet because they might contract the disease.

WHO reports said meningococcemia could affect any country.

Concerts hoped to cure Baguio folk traumatized by meningococcemia

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The city government has started a series of Sunday park concerts at the Malcolm Square, the city plaza, to hopefully contain one impact of the meningococcemia crisis that has so far been overlooked—trauma and hysteria generated among residents.

Regardless of whether the government will call it an outbreak or medical alert, many residents have started admitting to sleeplessness and even cases of nightmares due to anxieties over the deadly meningitis strain, said Benedicto Alhambra, acting city administrator.

"We will need to consult social behavior experts and psychologists to help us bring back the people [to the streets], but we are starting with concerts, daily park programs to show them everything is all right [with our world]," he said.

Alhambra said Mayor Braulio Yaranon and the city council would discuss this phenomenon on the heels of another Department of Health bulletin describing the crisis as a mere "medical alert."

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit earlier referred to the crisis as an outbreak but later qualified his statement, saying a meningococcemia alert was up in Baguio.

Vice Mayor Peter Ray Bautista reflected on the city government's decision to declare a state of calamity in a press conference on Jan. 5, but Yaranon immediately disowned that declaration.

Few people have braved the streets since meningococcemia reports first surfaced, Alhambra said.

Local bars, hotels and restaurants have reduced their operating hours due to a business slowdown, according to Gerry Beltran, vice president of the Baguio Association of Hotels and Inns (Bahai).

At least two Baguio universities admit to maintaining half-empty classrooms because students have been leaving Baguio upon the prodding of their parents in nearby provinces, Alhambra said.

Even consumption has declined, as shown by slow trade in the public market, groceries and supermarkets in downtown Baguio, according to an official of the Baguio-Benguet Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Perhaps the most telling observation about public anxiety is the city government's daily clean-up operations, which has not drawn the interest of the public.

"We get donations from businesses like detergents or disinfectants, but no private citizen has initiated his or her own clean-up drive. We have a few private volunteers, mostly tourism students of a university, but no ordinary citizen has been brave enough yet to come out and help us sweep the streets," Alhambra said.

The city government's decision to distribute free antibiotic drugs has eased some of the public tension, he said.

Doctors tapped by the Office of Muslim Affairs vaccinated half of the city's 5,000 Muslim residents on Saturday and scheduled vaccinations for the rest next week.

At the Malcolm Square these days is a banner raised by businessman Michael del Rosario, reminding residents that the disease "can be overcome" by "good hygiene, proper diet, exercise, cleanliness and prayers."

The nightly clean-up operations at the public market and Session Road, both considered the most congested sections of downtown Baguio, also "have their own positive effect on people," said artist Antonio Romawac.

"Before we can get other towns to believe everything is all right in Baguio, we residents should start believing it first," he said.

Two national celebrities apparently have that much faith in the city.

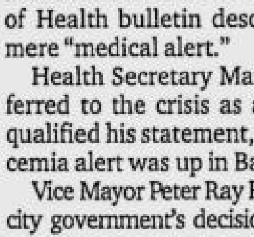
National Artist Eddie Romero drove to Baguio on Friday to receive an award from the Baguio leg of the Metro Manila Film Festival-Philippines on Saturday.

ROUNDUP

Boy, 4, dies in fire

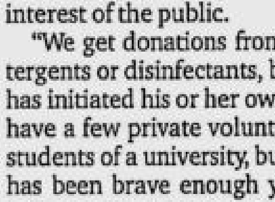
TUGUEGARAO CITY—A grandson of the president of a state university died in a fire that gutted their house in Barangay Tanza here Thursday afternoon. Anthon Perez, 4, grandson of Dr. Roger Perez, Cagayan State University president and former commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education, was alone in the basement room where the fire started at 2:30 p.m. Perez's neighbors noticed smoke coming from the room where the boy was sleeping. The boy's mother and other family members rushed to the room and forced open the door to find the boy afire. The boy was rushed to the hospital but died on Friday morning. ***Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Rights drive gains headway



DUMAGUETE CITY—Police has reported an increase in public awareness on the observance of the rights of children. In his annual accomplishment report, Provincial Police Director Marciano Delmar said the constant information drives on the Child Welfare Act, or Republic Act 7610, has encouraged stakeholders and stewards of children to take on the challenge of rearing the children in a safe and healthy environment. The police have established a division for women's and children's concerns in the 25 city and municipal police stations in the province. Delmar said that in 2004, the number of cases of violence against children had gone down to 280 from 376 in 2003. Cases of physical injuries dropped from 170 to 120 while the number of reported rape cases increased from 63 to 75. ***Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Whale sharks in Lingayen



BINMALEY, Pangasinan—Villagers and fishermen saw two whale sharks at the Lingayen Gulf on Saturday, three years after the last sighting of the giant sea creatures here. Westly Rosario, Dagupan center chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, said residents of Barangay San Isidro here saw a whale shark on Saturday morning on the village's beach. The shark, measuring almost six meters, could not swim back to sea because of the low tide, Rosario said. He said the shark was one of two whale sharks caught by a fishing boat's net that day. The other was freed while the boat was still in the middle of the gulf but the other refused to swim away until the boat reached the pier in San Isidro, Rosario said. ***Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

La Union airport pushed

BAGUIO CITY—Sen. Richard Gordon proposed the construction of a new airport at the Poro Point in San Fernando City, La Union, to boost air transportation in the country and promote local and foreign tourism. In a statement, Gordon said a new airport in San Fernando would boost travel and economic development in Abra, Benguet, La Union, Ilocos Sur and Pangasinan. A former United States air station, Poro Point is strategically located to serve the special export and economic zones in Northern and Central Luzon. Gordon said the airport would serve domestic and multinational corporations, including Texas Instruments Philippines Inc., the country's top corporation which has a factory in Baguio. "It's a shame to let the facilities left by the US Navy in Poro Point go to waste," said Gordon, a former tourism secretary. ***PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

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  January 22 - February 5, 2005 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- GERMAN
  January 15 - February 12, 2005 Saturday 2:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- ACCOUNTING FOR NON-ACCOUNTANTS
  January 15 - 29, 2005 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- SUPERVISORY DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM
  January 17 - 28, 2005 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- DYNAMICS OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
  January 18 - 27, 2005 T-Thursday 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- PERT/CPM
  January 22 - February 5, 2005 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- EFFECTIVE BUDGETARY CONTROL AND PROFIT PLANNING
  January 22 - February 5, 2005 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAL COURSE
  January 17 - 28, 2005 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT
  January 15 - February 5, 2005 Saturday 9:00AM - 12:00 NN
- INCOME AND BUSINESS TAXES FOR BUSINESSMEN, EXECUTIVES, AND PROFESSIONALS
  January 22 & 29, 2005 Saturday 9:30AM - 12:00 NN
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  January 15, 2005 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00PM
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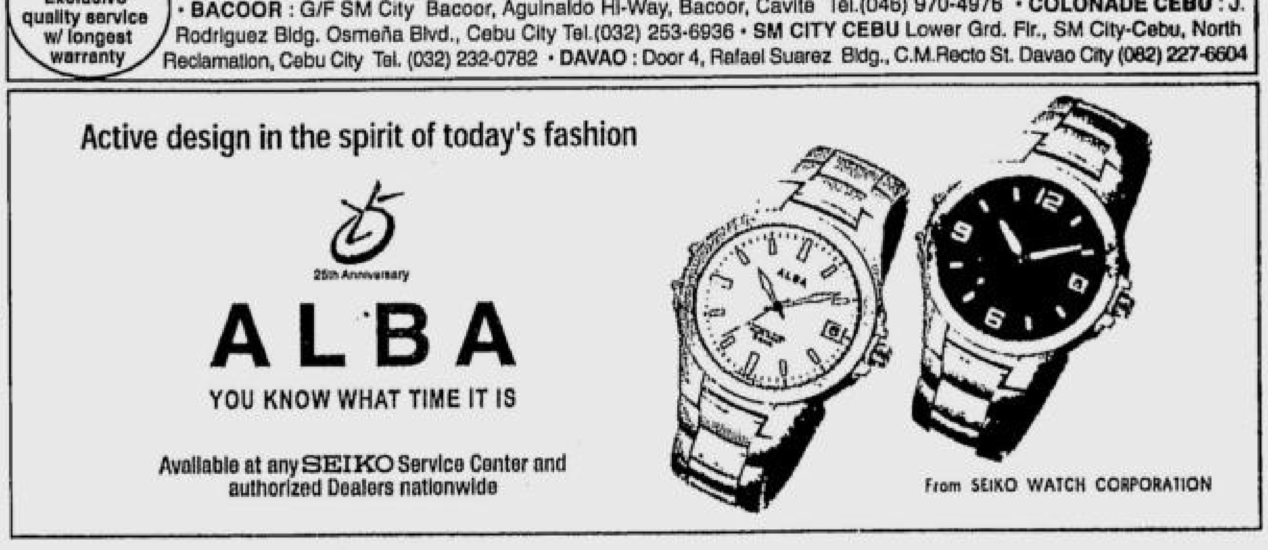

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Tsunami drills planned for S. Mindanao coasts

DAVAO CITY—Tsunami and earthquake drills are now being hatched along the beaches and resorts of Southern Mindanao after a series of tsunami scares that had sent people running away from the coastlines of Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and nearby Baganga town of Davao Oriental.

Carmelito Lupo, regional director of the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD), said the tsunami drills will keep people prepared and deepen their understanding of the nature of tsunamis that killed more than 150,000 people in 12 countries in the Indian Ocean.

Desiderio Cabanlit, officer in charge of Phivolcs-Davao, said the entire country, especially Mindanao, is vulnerable to tsunamis because of the number of volcanoes in the region, the presence of the Philippine fault line and quite a number of trenches on its seabed that can trigger earthquakes.

"That's why, it really pays to prepare and put up an early warning system," Cabanlit said.

The technical management group of the disaster coordinating council in the region, in which Phivolcs is a member, will meet this week to lay down the tsunami preparedness plan and map out the places most prone to such disaster, Lupo said.

Foremost in the plan is an information drive in the grassroots to deepen people's understanding of tsunamis, he said.

"It's only in knowing the extent of the danger in the area, can we plan, prevent and do appropriate response," Lupo said.

Considering the network of volcanoes, trenches and other earthquake generators located close to Mindanao, Cabanlit said what happened in the Indian Ocean, is not really very far from happening here.

But he said people should always look out for abnormal signs in the water and other early warning signs that could tell them there is a tsunami.

He defined tsunamis as giant seismic waves, sometimes as big as 30-100 meters, caused by undersea earthquake bringing about vertical movement in the soil; or caused by landslides or volcanic eruption, especially if the eruption bend is very near the sea.

"Sometimes, they're as high as three-story buildings and with the speed of an airplane," he said. But there are early warning signs to watch, among them, the occurrence of a high magnitude earthquake, he said.

"At seven magnitude, the trees will already be swaying strongly, something that won't escape your attention," he said, "People should seek higher grounds."

The Philippine Fault Line runs from Benguet, criss-crossing the Visayas area, before it reaches Mindanao. Cabanlit said this involves 1,200 kilometers of the most active fault line.

The Mindanao fault line also runs from Maasin to Zamboanga del Sur, including Pagadian, he added.

Aside from these fault lines, the country also has active trenches—structures submerged under the sea that can also trigger earthquakes, like the Sulu, Cotabato, Davao and Manila trenches and the Philippine trench.

He said that the presence of volcanoes, like those in Camiguin island, makes the country prone to earthquakes and tsunamis.

"There are people who do not want their places mentioned, but the whole country is prone to tsunamis, that's why, we have to prepare," Cabanlit told reporters.

Lupo said his office has been working out to strengthen the emergency broadcast system that will directly link up the regional disaster coordinating council with Mindanao's broadcast industry to allow a heightened response during earthquakes.

Cabanlit said there is a need to put up efficient warning system in areas prone to disaster.

In Davao Oriental, thousands of coastal residents in Baganga, Mati and Caraga towns evacuated to higher grounds on Friday evening for fear their villages would be hit by a tsunami after witnessing what they called an "unusual" level of low tide.

Melinda Abarca, head of the provincial disaster coordinating council, said they were able to convince some of the evacuees that there was nothing to fear about the "unusual low tide" and return to their homes only yesterday.

The tsunami scare also hit Davao City, which gave more than a thousand people living along the coastal area in Ilang, Tibungco District, a sleepless Sunday night.

Residents of some 500 households in Ilang went into panic and abandoned their houses starting at around 10 p.m. Sunday after receiving text messages that said a tsunami would hit their place.

Alexander Algabre, a reporter of dxUM Radyo Ukay and a resident of Ilang, said he was awakened by his neighbors telling him that they had to leave their place because a tsunami was coming.

Algabre said he told his neighbors to stay calm as there was no truth to the report, but he was ignored.

Algabre's neighbors returned to their homes yesterday morning. *Germelina Lacorte with reports from Ferdinand O. Zuasola and Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Panglao Island resort owners want deadline for 'salvage zone' enforcement extended

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Resort owners on Panglao Island want Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado to extend the deadline to February for the enforcement of the 20-meter easement area along the shorelines of the resort island.

Last September, Aumentado issued Executive Order 13 seeking to enforce the "salvage zones," or an easement for public use along the shorelines of Panglao Island to protect its pristine waters in the wake of the tourist influx.

"What happened is that we have many guests at this time, it's sort of untimely (to enforce the salvage zones)," said Panglao Mayor Doloreich Dumaluan.

The mayor said many Caucasian tourists are staying in the various resorts particularly in the Tawala area.

Dumaluan said that in a meeting with Panglao resort owners, the governor indicated he was amenable to extending the Jan. 1 deadline he has set but wanted EO 13 to be implemented starting the second week of February.

EO 13 also seeks to enforce sanitation laws on the island.

Dumaluan said that once the 20-meter salvage zones are cleared of structures, what will remain are "only umbrellas" shielding makeshift tables for guests who prefer to stay near the shore.

Asked if he thinks there will be no more requests for extensions, Dumaluan said the February deadline is already "realistic."

"I already asked for a time frame and a commitment on their part and I already went out to help them," he added.

The mayor said this extension was in response to their request "and I hope they will also comply with our request" [to clear the salvage zone].

"There will be no more roads, no more vehicles allowed to venture inside [the salvage zone area]," Dumaluan added.

The mayor said the beachfronts would be off-limits to parked vehicles.

Resort owner Paz Trotin of Bohol Divers Lodge has volunteered a space in her resort for use as parking area, he said.

Tricycles and motorcycles-for-hire will also be assigned parking areas, the mayor said.

At present, he said the unrestricted movement of the vehicles for hire has been unnerving to guests who want peace.

"Sometimes, there are vehicles obstructing the roads so even (the problem of unregulated vehicular traffic) will be attended to," the mayor added.

The kilometer-long Alona stretch where most of the resorts are bunched together is about three and a half kilometers from the town proper.

Dumaluan said that of the 52 registered tourism establishments including dive shops in the town, about 30 operate in the Alona area.

The beaches of Panglao and other coastal towns have increasingly attracted foreign and domestic tourists.

Aumentado noted that certain natural and juridical persons established structures "within the prohibited zone such as cottages, restaurants, resorts" and other buildings.

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Pagasa official says 5 gov't radar systems not in good condition

BAGUIO CITY—The five weather radar systems in the different relay stations in the country are not in good condition and the money the government would release would help rehabilitate these vital equipment, a weather official here said.

Joseph Rios, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) here, said the P25 million that the government would release to Pagasa would help augment the P17 million released by the Department of Science and Technology to repair and maintain the weather surveillance system.

A Pagasa advisory said the money would help repair the radar systems installed in Baguio, Aparri (Cagayan), Aurora and Quezon.

The fund will also cover the repair of the weather stations damaged by recent typhoons and landslides in Casiguran and Baler in Aurora and in Infanta, Quezon.

The Baguio weather surveillance radar was damaged when it was hit by lightning in 1990 and 1993. The Baguio radar was last used in 2001 during the onslaught of typhoon "Feria," Rios said.

The existing weather surveillance systems are operating irregularly.

"Sometimes we get a signal, sometimes we don't. Our radar systems need repair and maintenance because they always bog down. The maintenance itself is too costly, we just hope these funds would arrive soon," Rios told the INQUIRER.

He said despite their intermittent operations, the radar systems have been reliable during typhoons.

He said weather observers also rely on other forecasting systems, such as surface observation, satellite imaging and numerical weather prediction (NWP) relayed through the Internet by the Pagasa main station in Metro Manila.

However, not all weather stations are equipped with computers.

Rios said of the 60 relay-monitoring stations in the country, at least 10 have Internet connections. These stations are under the Philippine Interactive Climate and Weather Information Network (Picwin), an online cluster of Pagasa's weather stations.

Baguio is one of the weather stations under Picwin.

Rios said other weather stations not covered by Picwin rely on telephones for weather forecast updates from Pagasa in Metro Manila.

An advisory said the P25.9 million from the e-Government fund would be released to Pagasa to implement the Picwin, one of the projects approved by the e-Government implementation committee and the Department of Budget and Management.

The establishment of an online cluster would enhance the agency's capability in weather, climate and hydrological forecasting, it said.

The advisory said the Picwin would enable all Pagasa stations in the country to have computers and additional communication equipment for quick transmission of critical weather-related information.

"With the refurbishment of the radar systems and the damaged weather stations and with the networking of all its 60 weather stations as well as its increased computing speed, Pagasa can provide more accurate and timely forecasting and warning services for tropical cyclones and other severe weather systems in order to mitigate its potential adverse impacts," it said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier ordered the full modernization of the country's weather forecasting system to help Filipinos better prepare for disasters. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Hasty conclusion of murder case alarms Church official

CITY OF CALAPAN—A Church official here said during the funeral Mass for slain Sta. Cruz town councilor Francisco Gatdula that the hasty conclusion of the case and filing of a charge against a suspected killer was alarming, saying police should also look at other angles behind the killing.

"The hasty conclusion of the case and the immediate filing of a charge against the suspect really alarmed us. Why did they limit the motive for the murder to one angle?" said Fr. Philip Alex Alcantara, director of the Social Services Commission of the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose.

Gatdula was gunned down by unidentified armed men on Christmas eve while going to church for the midnight Mass.

His case was the latest in a series of killings in Mindoro, which has alarmed local Church officials.

Earlier killed were Recto Isidro, Adrian Alegria, Pastor Noli Madarang and Carlos Lacaden.

The police immediately filed a case of murder against suspect Reynaldo Laylo, alias Ka Magsay.

Gatdula's funeral on Jan. 2 was attended by hundreds of relatives, friends and townmates, including 21 priests.

Alcantara said the Church would not be true to its role of valuing God's most precious gift of life if it kept quiet.

He appealed for witnesses to stand up to their moral obligation to help shed light on the case.

Gatdula had been an ally of the Church in its anti-Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit stance.

The last time he spoke to the INQUIRER through his cell phone last October, he said he already did not like what was happening to his town as he tried to find out who was telling the truth between the military and militant groups who had accused the military of harassment as they conducted a medical mission.

Gatdula is survived by nine children, including a priest. His wife, Wilmida, has asked local political leaders to help them seek justice.

Occidental Mindoro Bishop Antonio Palang has appealed for peace. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Attack in P. Princesa not NPA's—Wescom

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The New People's Army (NPA) was not the one responsible for the attack of a military post in Barangay Tanabag here on Jan. 3, the Western Command said.

The Wescom clarified that it was not an attack after the two-week ceasefire ended but a case of miscommunication.

Earlier reports said that armed men on board two vans fired at an Army detachment.

It was the Special Operations Wing of the Philippine Air Force that had a detachment in Barangay Tanabag.

"This is not an internal security operation. This is the operation of the KSK (Kilusan Sagip Kalikasan), to which our men provided assistance," Wescom chief Vice Adm. Ruben Domingo said in a press conference. *Jofelle P. Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Environment officer faces probe for tree permit

SMOKEY charcoal-making pits dot the coastlines of typhoon-devastated northern Quezon province.

DELFIN T. MALLARI JR./PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

By Jani Arnaiz
PDI Visayas Bureau

MAASIN CITY—Southern Leyte Rep. Roger Mercado has sought an investigation of Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer Elpidio Simon for issuing a permit to cut narra and molave trees in Barangay Gawisan, which the Mines Geosciences Bureau has declared a disaster area.

Mercado said he would ask Environment Secretary Michael Defensor to sack Simon if found violating the law by issuing the permit.

He told the INQUIRER that he had been campaigning for massive planting of trees, yet Simon, an environment official, has given a permit to cut tree species protected by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources from a disaster area.

"We are very serious in our effort to save the environment and we can't tolerate what he did," he added.

Barangay Gawisan chair Luz Mayorca sought the help of the congressman after they discovered some men with chainsaws cutting five over 50-year-old narra and molave trees in the village last December.

Mayorca said she has not given any certification allowing the cutting of the trees as required by the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office.

She said there is an ordinance that prohibits the cutting of trees in her barangay.

Simon issued private land timber permit to cut eight pieces of molave and narra trees to landowner Renato Magallanes for consignee of the lumber, Nerio Cepada, an alleged owner of a furniture shop.

He charged Magallanes P27,800 in permit fees. The permit was issued Nov. 19, 2004, with an expiration date of Dec. 20.

The trees measured from half a meter to 1.5 meter in diameter with an estimated value of not less than P100,000.

It was ironic that the terms and conditions stipulated at the back of the permit stated: "That cutting, transport and disposition of narra as well as almaciga and other premium hardwood species listed under (DENR Administrative Order) No. 78, series of 1987 is absolutely prohibited under this permit."

"That selective cutting shall be taken in areas with slope greater that 18 percent," it added. Molave is among the premium hardwood species protected by the DENR under DAO No. 78.

Simon, however, clarified that the cutting of narra trees has been deregulated by then Environment Secretary Elizea Gozun.

But, he added, it was suspended when landslides and mudslides struck three towns on Panaon Island in Southern Leyte on Dec. 19, 2003, which killed about 150 people.

"But when [Environment] Secretary Michael Defensor assumed, he lifted the ban on the cutting of narra trees," Simon told the INQUIRER.

He also belied the report that it was prohibited to cut trees from a disaster-declared area.

"In fact, MGB has recommended the cutting of all trees and coconut in Gawisan to prevent clogging in case of a landslide, which is feared to occur anytime in the barangay," he added.

The village has been declared a disaster area after it was found sinking due to sink-holes and illegal logging.

More than 20 families have been relocated to safer ground when their houses and the ground began to crack two years ago.

Wood becomes Dingalan folks' hope for survival, shelter

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

DINGALAN, Aurora—Wood for charcoal or for shelter? What to do with the logs that landslides had washed down has become a question of survival for thousands of families here making do now with less relief goods.

For farmer Roberto Suarez, the choice was clear: Make charcoal but from out of smaller trees. He resumed the trade two weeks ago when the food ration began thinning out.

Since Monday when none had come, he gave in to the price of traders who bought each sackful at only P35. "Last week it was P50 a sack. Some buyers want three sacks at a bargain price of P100. They did not have pity on us," Suarez said. "It did not matter to them that there's a crisis here."

To Bien Guia, a father of four, charcoal-making was meant as "*pantawid-gutom*" (something to stave the hunger off).

The logs, rocks and mud that had rolled from the mountains on several instances since Nov. 22 had settled at the coast, swamping and destroying his banca.

Guia has not sailed out to the sea since. He said the current price of charcoal does not even compensate for the labor and time. The entire process eats up about a week.

"My family needs at least P100 a day to eat," he said, lamenting the drop in price of charcoal.

For this fisherman who left Cavite only to be struck by tragedy in Dingalan, his option now is to leave for Metro Manila and take construction jobs there.

"It's difficult to live here now," he said.

But the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has to deal with thousands of charcoal makers in this town.

On Thursday, retired Gen. Victor Corpus, appointed recently as chief of the DENR's Natural Resources Development Corp., allowed the municipal government to take charge of retrieving the logs. At least 2,000 cubic meters of logs have been inventoried in river channels, according to regional forestry chief Ricardo Calderon.

Corpus, Calderon said, left to local officials the task of distributing the wood to families rendered homeless by the landslides.

But Corpus sent an NRDC team to do another inventory and to strictly monitor the distribution.

Since November, men believed to be suppliers of illegal loggers had dashed to the Mahogany River to retrieve drifting logs.

Armed with chainsaws, they cornered Narra wood, cutting these right on the site. In the following weeks, freshly cut lumber were being carried out of the landslides-affected villages. Dingalan's economy developed from logging that began in the 1930s. But forest supervisor James Martinez said no logs had managed to pass through the DENR checkpoint in the last four weeks. "Only cargoes of charcoal were being hauled," he said. The logs, Calderon said, are intended for walling and flooring materials of houses to be rebuilt under the local government's resettlement program.

The DENR team has yet to assess if displaced residents have exploited new areas following the revived trade in charcoal-production. Those with forestry contracts with the DENR are only allowed to cut twigs and branches for charcoal.

7 killed in road mishap in Zamboanga del Sur

GUIPOS, Zamboanga del Sur—At least seven persons were killed while 39 others were hurt in a road mishap here Friday afternoon, police said.

A southbound Galban Express from Pagadian City was descending from a road along Barangay Canunan here around 2:15 p.m. when its brakes malfunctioned.

SPO3 Bonifacio Panaga, town police investigator, said the bus lost its brakes and smashed the rear of a 10-wheeler truck parked by the roadside. The truck was chartered by the San Miguel Corp.

At the time of the incident, SMC personnel were unloading cases of beer into a nearby store, police said.

Because of the impact, several bus passengers were thrown out of the window, witnesses said.

Six of the victims died on the spot while the seventh, a woman, expired around 9 p.m. of Friday.

The names of the dead victims were still unknown at press time.

Of the critically wounded, 22 were brought to the Jamelarin District Hospital in Pagadian City, 12 to the provincial hospital, also in Pagadian City, while five others were rushed to the Pagadian City Medical Center. *Hernan P. dela Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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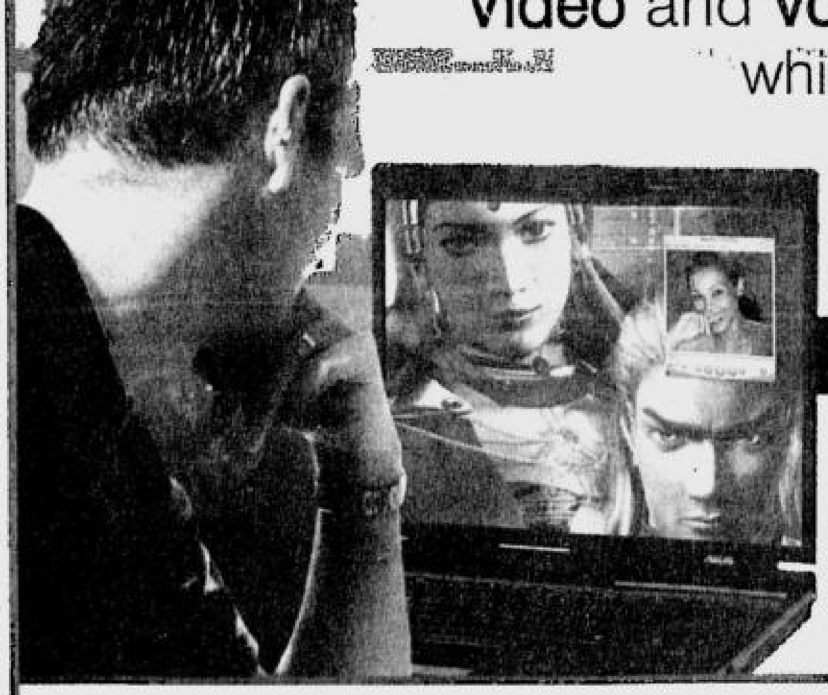

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Devastation traced to lost mangroves

From page A1

fish," he said, staring out to the wind-whipped sea and wondering aloud just how much remained.

"We still have to look and see what happened," Sirinaga said nervously, taking a break from reconstruction work on the tsunami-ruined dive shop where he works. "I hope it hasn't been destroyed."

Visibility has been too bad since the giant waves struck to take the shop's only seaworthy boat out to check on the reef with a dive, but a few snorkeling trips near the shore have offered a gloomy glimpse of the consequences.

Three *tuk-tuks*, two motorbikes and huge chunks of boats litter just one section of the bay, and coral closer to shore is smothered in sand.

Sirinaga is keen to get back in the water for a full assessment but is baffled by the unforgiving elements.

"Normally in season, at this time, it's a flat, calm sea. But since this happened, the sea is rough. It's different."

Palm-fringed Unawatuna beach is a popular dive location during 50 to 60 divers a day in peak season. Before the tsunami struck last Dec. 26, it was one of hundreds of resorts around the Indian Ocean coastline that was busy year-round with snorkelers, scuba divers and tourists in search of paradise.

Across thousands of miles of tropical Asian coastline, there are similar scenes of destruction. Tourist hotels demolished by the towering waves, entire fishing villages swept away.

Mangroves cleared

"What has made this a disaster is that people have started to occupy part of the landscape that they shouldn't have occupied," said Jeff McNeely, chief scientist of the Swiss-based World Conservation Union, who lived for several years in Indonesia and Thailand, two of the countries worst hit by the disaster.

"Fifty years ago the coastline was not densely occupied as now by tourist hotels."

The beach-dwelling poor and itinerant fishing communities bore the brunt of the disaster. Many had cleared mangroves and started shrimp farms to feed the huge Western market for cheap prawns.

"The mangroves were all along the coasts where there are shallow waters. They offered protection against things like tsunamis," said McNeely.

"They were cleared by people who didn't have the long-term knowledge of why these mangroves should have been saved, by outsiders who get concessions from the governments and set up shrimp or prawn farms."

Parts of India and Burma (Myanmar), where coral reefs and mangroves remained intact, fared much better when the waves hit than the denuded coastlines of Thailand and parts of Sri Lanka, experts noted.

"Places that had healthy coral reefs and intact mangroves were far less badly hit than places where the reefs had been damaged and the mangroves ripped out and replaced by beach front hotels and prawn farms," said Simon Cripps, director of the Global Marine Program at environment group WWF International.

"Coral reefs act as a natural breakwater and mangroves are a natural shock absorber, and this applies to floods and cyclones as well as tsunamis," he said.

Conservationists hope lessons will be learned from the catastrophe which left more than 155,000 people dead and wiped out homes and livelihoods of millions more.

The United Nations Environment Program (Unep) has earmarked $1 million to address immediate environmental needs in the regions struck by giant waves across the Indian Ocean coasts.

Rehabilitation

But Unep Executive Director Klaus Toepfer stressed "revitalizing local communities and their livelihoods will require rehabilitating and protecting vital natural ecosystems, in particular mangrove forests and coral reefs."

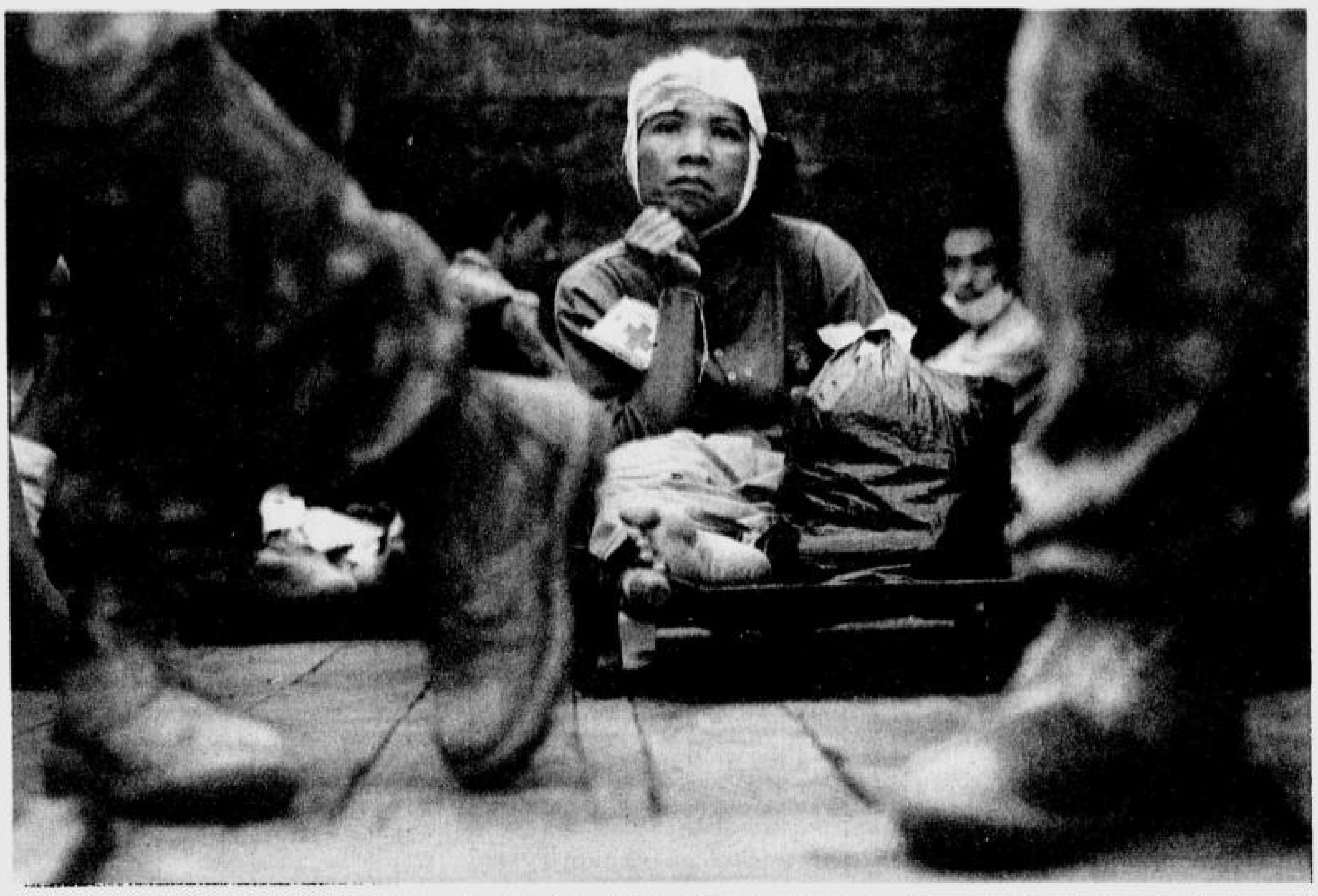
While beaches can be cleaned and deluxe hotels restored relatively quickly, marine life might not recover during the lifetime of coastal dwellers such as dive instructor Sirinaga, analysts say.

"The coral reef system might be totally destroyed. It will take hundreds of years to grow back," said director of Conservation International in the Indonesian resort island of Bali, Ketut Sarjana Putra.

When a tsunami passes, reef structures grind into each other, causing extensive damage. In serious cases recovery would be slow as there would be fewer larval animals to repopulate the coral.

Major problems include a loss of fish, displaced by the waves from their habitat, and the amount of silt, sand and organic matter churned into the water which would "smother" vegetation and marine life.

Sirinaga looks out at the mud-covered coral in Unawatuna and expresses hope that it has not been totally destroyed. "Otherwise … ," he says, pausing for words, "… well, I'd be very sorry about that." *AFP*



GUARDED by Australian soldiers, an injured woman is brought to a hospital by a truck at the military airport in Banda Aceh, Indonesia. AP

Tsunami donors give, but they also take back

From page A1

production of its mineral-enriched peanut paste called "plumpynut" and zinc tablets to combat diarrhea.

"We shouldn't blush at the fact that we're a private company. Obviously, we do make profit, otherwise we'd go down, but most is invested in research," said Beatrice Sinkins, who is in charge of developing Nutriset's zinc tablets.

Money stays home?

Unicef spent just over $700 million in 2003 on procurement, up 30 percent from the previous year, and uses around 700 companies—two thirds of which are in developed countries.

In 2003, its top suppliers by value of orders were Belgium, France, India, Italy, Denmark, Japan, the United States, Britain, Germany and Kenya.

Nutriset got nearly $5.75 million worth of orders in a year when the UN agency helped children in Iraq, Afghanistan and Liberia.

Aid agencies say they strive to buy more from countries hit by disasters, but sometimes the specialist products are available only in the West.

Japanese stock investors seem to believe some of their government's generosity will end up in domestic bank accounts.

While Japan was pledging $500 million for relief efforts at a tsunami conference in Jakarta, shares in engineering consultancy Nippon Koei Co. soared nearly 20 percent.

Japanese firm Tetra Co., which makes wave-breaking concrete blocks, has jumped about 30 percent since the tsunami.

The prospect of rebuilding has also lifted shares in cement, noodle and engineering firms in some of the hardest hit countries, helping make Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia the best performing markets in Asia this year.

Tax relief

As the tsunami death toll rises further, Western companies are rushing to help.

US drug maker Pfizer has donated $10 million in cash and $25 million worth of health care products, while Johnson and Johnson has donated $2 million plus supplies.

But aid agencies are wary of donations in kind rather than money because they can be difficult to collect and manage.

The World Health Organization's representative in Thailand, William Aldis, suggested firms used donations to get tax relief.

Security concerns

As the massive aid operation entered its third week, gunfire erupted briefly on Sunday in Indonesia's major tsunami aid base of Banda Aceh. While no casualties were reported, the incident could raise concerns about the safety of Western aid workers pouring into the region.

Indonesian police blamed the gunfire on rebels who have been fighting for an independent homeland for nearly three decades.

"We do have to be worried and take care of ourselves. You have to proceed with due caution. This has been and is a zone of conflict," said Aly-Kahn Rajami, program manager of CARE International.

Indonesia's chief social welfare minister Alwi Shihab said the military had ordered a high alert because there might be infiltration by those wary of the foreigners' presence.

Grenades kill 3

In Sri Lanka, two hand grenades hurled in a rare clash between Christians and Hindus killed at least three people and injured 37 others in an eastern region where international aid workers are helping tsunami victims. No relief workers were hurt.

The US military, which has hundreds of Marines, Navy personnel and troops on the ground on Sumatra and in Sri Lanka, said aid workers must remain vigilant while working in restive areas.

"Security is a constant planning factor in all that we do," US Army aid coordinator Maj. Nelson Chang said.

The tropical downpour turned the airport at the Sumatran city of Banda Aceh, the hub for aid supplies, into a muddy mess and soaked piles of cardboard boxes of aid sitting on the tarmac.

It's the middle of the rainy season in Indonesia and the pounding downpours could further complicate a relief effort already hamstrung by damaged infrastructure, including roads and bridges washed away. *INQUIRER wires*

Setback for sex industry

PHUKET'S sex industry, a mainstay of Thailand's economy, may have been hard hit by the tsunamis, but prostitutes and their clients are convinced that business will soon be brisk again.

On Patong's main drag on the island of Phuket, the open-air bars, discos and strip clubs stand in rows as far as the eye can see.

But in spite of the neon lights, the loud music and the girls, the clients are few and far between.

Work has dropped by an estimated 80 percent since the tidal waves struck on Dec. 26.

While rarely offered from street corners, the sex trade in Thailand permeates thousands of bars, discos, massage parlors and restaurants and workers often work independently.

Thai officials estimate the number of sex workers at 80,000. International groups put the number at between 800,000 and two million women and men.

Some 20,000 girls—and boys—work on Patong. Usually at this time of year, the area is teeming with people.

But after the waves hit, many sex workers returned to their families to wait for better days. *AFP*

Ancient justice system effective in 2 towns

From page A1

was to her private parts.

If one is caught stealing a carabao, he will be made to pay thrice the value of the animal. The money will be divided equally among three parties: the animal's true owner, the *ulama* council and the person(s) who helped find the stolen carabao.

The protagonists need not hire lawyers when facing the council. Neither are they made to wait for years for the decision. All that is asked of them is total respect for the wisdom of the religious leaders or clan chiefs, who sit collectively as judges.

The decisions almost always call for the payment of damages—blood money if the crime led to someone's death. The offender is detained while the council deliberates on the case and is released upon payment of the damages.

No attorney's fees

Mayors Alexander Tomawis of Barira and Ramon Piang of North Upi said they were simply applying the customs and traditions of their people.

"The advantage is that cases are resolved swiftly and the people don't need to spend for attorneys or other fees," Tomawis told the INQUIRER during a recent visit. "Since the community itself witnesses how a case gets resolved, good relationships between the opposing sides can easily be restored and vendettas are unlikely."

Legal purists may question the legitimacy of such practices because they virtually supplant the functions of the police or the courts. The mayor recalled that when he recently shared the concept at a forum on governance at the Asian Institute of Management, he was asked from what book or political model he got the idea. He cited none.

But who can really blame Tomawis for preferring a less complicated justice system for his people?

The 34-year-old mayor presides over the town that until 2000 hosted the command center of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Tucked in its northern hills was the once impenetrable headquarters of then MILF Chair Salamat Hashim.

Barira was one of the three Maguindanao towns (sandwiched between Matanog and Baldon) straddled by Camp Abubakar, the vast rebel stronghold that was captured by the military during the Estrada administration's "all-out war" against the MILF.

Clan wars

With MILF perimeter bunkers and checkpoints just about 12 km north of the municipal hall, Barira's location, which effectively put it outside the national government's control, encouraged "*ridos*" (bloody clan wars) and left its villages among the poorest in the country.

"Before, if you grew crops away from your house and wanted to check on your field, you first sent out your wife to see if the way to the farm was clear either of rebels or of your personal enemies," said Tomawis. The mayor comes from one of Barira's political families and now blames his clan's past "*ridos*" for his failure to finish college.

From a previous population of 50,000, all that was left for Tomawis to govern when he got elected to his first term in 2001 were about 18,000 residents, the rest having fled their homes during the bombardment of Abubakar.

Iranon tribe

The former MILF stronghold is now a military-held area called Camp Iranon, named after the mayor's Iranon tribe. With the menace posed by rebels gone, the town's impoverished Muslim families can now move around freely to work in their cornfields, Tomawis said.

A 22-km dirt road opened in 2002 now connects the town to neighboring Parang, where a public market awaits Barirang's produce. Before, people either had to hike for hours or load their corn on horses to get in and out of Barirang.

The town has yet to be blessed with electricity. Tomawis' office has light bulbs and his conference hall a microphone, but that's thanks to a gas-fueled generator. A few houses by the roadside surprisingly have TV antennas on their roofs, their sets operated by car batteries. Water is drawn from four rivers and a waterfalls.

Words of the Koran

Tomawis believes that with his town still crawling out of poverty and ignorance, he could use some help from a few wise old men who had mastered neither the 1987 Constitution nor the Revised Penal Code, but the words of the Koran and the sensibilities of the people.

"The religious sector went largely unappreciated when Abubakar was still there and forced us to live *kanya-kanya* [to each his own]. The elders were regarded as useless," Tomawis recalled.

But with the creation of the ulama council, "I actually gave them the task of uniting the community, because peace can easily be broken and (development) projects cannot succeed if no one commands respect among the people."

As for "*ridos*" and political feuds, the town's spiritual leaders are in a credible position to persuade everyone "to just forget about the past," he said.

Tri-people

In North Upi, the town has been following a "tri-people conflict resolution process" since 2002 because no single religious or ethnic group can claim to be the majority, according to Mayor Piang.

The two-term mayor, a former high school principal, said his constituents were 33-percent Christian, 23-percent Muslim and 44-percent Tiruray, the tribe to which Piang belongs.

Unlike Barira, North Upi is considerably more developed and, according to Piang, has seen little trouble from the rebels. It has a vibrant urban center, an agricultural college, a community radio station, and even Internet service at the municipal hall.

"We created a council that works as an amicable settlement body," he said. The six-seat council has two elderly representatives each from the three "cultures."

Since he became mayor, the panel has handled around 30 cases, of which only five were not resolved and had to be elevated to the police and the courts, Piang said.

Take one case: A road accident involving a wayward truck that killed seven passengers—all Muslim farmers who had hitched a ride after the vehicle had picked up their harvest for transport to the market.

Blood money

"The victims' families demanded P120,000 each in blood money from the businessman, a Christian, who owned the truck," Piang narrated.

"The council was convened. An imam was called to explain (the side of the Muslim victims). Finally, we agreed that the businessman will just pay P20,000 in blood money per dead but will also pay for the burial, while the local government will chip in P5,000 in assistance per family."

Sincere, transparent

Earlier, Piang made a presentation about the council at a conference in Manila. At least one fellow mayor from, surprisingly, another Mindanao town questioned the authority of the body.

Piang then argued that "over and above (the powers vested in local officials) by the Local Government Code, this was one initiative the community could take to maintain peace and order … and we've been successful.

"In our old customs and traditions, nothing is impossible so long as the leaders are respected and the people see them as sincere and transparent," he said.

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Proposed NLEX toll fees too high? Wait till new management takes over

IT JUST keeps getting worse.

Toll rates for the North Luzon Expressway may go up by one or two more centavos per kilometer on top of the planned fees when the Manila North Tollways Corp. assumes management of the freeway in February.

Already, planned rates are more than 500 percent of current fees.

"It may change by one or two centavos per kilometer, depending on the date the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) will compute (the proposed toll rates)," MNTC president Jose de Jesus said Saturday.

The MNTC—a joint venture of the Lopez family-owned First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp., Egis Projects S.A., Leighton Asia Ltd. and the state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp.—is completing the rehabilitation and upgrading of the 82-km NLEX, which it will then manage.

But before it can take over the highway, MNTC needs to first apply for a certificate of substantial completion before the TRB and then submit an application for a toll operating permit to the board.

De Jesus said these two final requirements had been delayed because MNTC ordered Leighton to do additional remedial work on the P18-billion project to make sure it met quality and safety standards.

"The estimate of the contractor is end of next week, but (it) has not met (its) previous deadlines so I'll give (them) another week," De Jesus said, referring to the third week of January.

"If everything goes well, we'll be finished by the end of January. By February, we hope to take over," De Jesus said.

But a takeover may take longer in coming.

The certificate for substantial completion will come only after the TRB has determined whether the MNTC conformed to the detailed engineering design and requirements of commercial operations such as toll collection, traffic management and safety.

The toll operating permit, on the other hand, will be issued only after the certificate of completion has been given. Also, the TRB would have to review the toll rate formula contained in the 1998 Supplemental Toll Operating Agreement (STOA).

MNTC derived its opening toll rates based on a rate base of P14 from Balintawak in Quezon City to Marilao, Bulacan, and 82 centavos per km from Marilao to Sta. Ines in Mabalacat, Pampanga.

With inflation and foreign exchange rates considered, the new toll fees are being pegged at P2.49 per km for cars, P6.23 for buses and light trucks and P7.47 for heavy trucks.

The STOA allows MNTC to increase rates every two years.

Reducing the rates or collecting these on a staggered basis within a longer period, which business groups in Pampanga proposed, would not be possible.

"We can't change terms or else we default (on our loans)," De Jesus said.

He said a pending resolution in Congress would only review the toll rates, not the STOA. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

MMDA gets wet and wild

JUST LIKE HOME BOY CABRIDO
Children play with 2-year-old penguins in a section of the Harrison Plaza in Manila made to look like the birds' habitat, complete with snow and a snowman. The penguins are acting as ambassadors of goodwill for Ecos Environment Foundation which organized a penguin summit at the mall on Saturday.

By Margaux C. Ortiz

STAY in designated areas or risk getting wet courtesy of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday announced that the agency would be using rags to wet and discourage pedestrians from blocking the roads and causing traffic jams.

Fernando said blanket-sized rags would be hung "like flags" on the agency's vehicles, which would be deployed on Metro Manila's main roads.

Road discipline

"This is a way to discipline pedestrians who refuse to abide by road rules," Fernando said in a phone interview.

He explained, "These pedestrians have become increasingly hardheaded, even occupying as much as two lanes of major roads like Marcos Highway."

However, this wet solution is only part of a heightened MMDA campaign against pedestrians who use the roads instead of sidewalks.

The MMDA chair said he already directed the agency's traffic enforcers to arrest and cite violators for jaywalking.

Fine and a lecture

Aside from paying a P100 to P200 fine, which is determined by the local government unit, jaywalkers are gathered in prison vans where they are given a lecture on road rules.

Violators are also made to render community service.

The MMDA chief said he had issued a directive to the agency's traffic enforcers to strictly abide by the "about-face policy."

With the policy, enforcers are directed to focus on the pedestrians instead of the motorists.

"We have forgotten that people, by blocking the roadways, cause more disorder on the streets than the motorists themselves," Fernando said.

POST-HOLIDAY TRASH

Not ours, say Malabon, Caloocan

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

HERE is one piece of land which no one seems to want.

In fact, the cities of Malabon and Caloocan have been denying owning that part of the center island on Dagat-Dagatan Avenue where a pile of garbage has grown and remained since Christmas Day.

Passersby and residents have been complaining of the stench. Some of them have even started burning garbage in the hope of reducing the volume.

"No one has bothered to haul it. The Caloocan and Malabon governments have been pointing fingers at each other," tricycle driver Rey, 37, said in Filipino. Their terminal is just across the pile of trash.

"We can no longer breathe because of the smoke and stench," he added.

Even jeepney drivers and passengers passing on that stretch of Dagat-Dagatan Avenue are covering their noses.

The center island, which some residents used as their private dump, separates Malabon and Caloocan.

Sought for comment, Caloocan environment and sanitation services chief Al Sta. Maria said the area was part of Malabon.

"We (in Caloocan) don't have any problem with our garbage collection," Sta. Maria said.

But Malabon Mayor Canuto Oreta retorted that the makeshift dump in the middle of the road was under the jurisdiction of Caloocan City.

"I have seen the garbage (on the center island). It belongs to Caloocan City," Oreta said.

He said they had problems with garbage collection early this week but immediately added that the problem had been solved and that the situation had returned to normal.

Fernando wants old PUVs out

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday warned transport operators to get rid of their dilapidated vehicles or face the suspension of their franchise.

"There has been a proliferation of derelict buses and jeepneys in Metro Manila," Fernando said.

He said, "Aside from being eyesores, there is a need to prevent these PUVs from plying the roads because they could cause traffic jams by breaking down."

The MMDA chair said he had observed that many bus units have broken doors, which could result in accidents.

The agency has slapped a P1,000 fine on operators whose units had non-operable doors, misaligned bodies, broken windows and damaged windshields.

Fernando said operators who refuse to fix or get rid of their dilapidated units would have to face the suspension and eventual cancellation of their franchise. *Margaux C. Ortiz*

Makati celebrates culture in fest

THE MAKATI City government is set to hold a costume and street dancing festival as part of its campaign to preserve the country's cultural heritage.

"The city celebrates the Caracol to inculcate in the minds of the young the importance of preserving our cultural heritage," Mayor Jejomar Binay said.

The Caracol festival is a combination of the country's street dancing celebrations such as Cebu City's Sinulog, Iloilo's Ati-atihan and Bacolod's Dinagyang.

The city's version of the festivity organized by its Museum and Cultural Affairs Office (MCAO) will be held on Jan. 16, highlighted by a grand afternoon parade along Ayala Avenue that is expected to draw the participation of thousands of students.

The spectacle of the students wearing multicolored costumes from different public schools will end at the Glorietta 4 grounds.

According to the MCAO, participants will parade in costumes mimicking the country's animals like the tamaraw, carabao, tarsier, eagle, monkey and python.

Earth-inspired and indigenous attire made to look like flowers and fruit trees were designed by artists especially for the festival.

A cash award of P5,000 will be given for the most original costume.

There will also be a street dancing contest where winners can claim cash prizes of P25,000 for the first prize, P20,000 for the second prize, and P15,000 for third.

The Caracol was conceptualized in 1986 to boost the local tourism industry. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

METROBRIEFS

Panic over blaze

FIRE razed a three-story house in Caloocan City yesterday afternoon, sending neighbors and employees into a panic. Firefighters put out the fire in less than an hour, limiting the damage to about P100,000, SFO1 Arvin David said. The fire, which gutted the house of the Jadico family on Langaray Street in Dagat-Dagatan Avenue, began about 1:30 p.m. at the second floor of the house. Neighbors scrambled out of their houses, carrying appliances and sacks of clothes because the house was standing beside a gasoline station. The INQUIRER saw refrigerators and television sets lined up on Langaray Street. The blaze also partially damaged an adjacent house. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

Uniform stations

THE NATIONAL Police Commission (Napolcom) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) are planning to create uniform police stations nationwide in a move to bring the community closer to the law. "People will have an easier time locating police stations and precincts that are identical in structure and architecture," Napolcom spokesperson Bernardo Calibo said.

GNC homecoming

GUAGUA National Colleges will hold an alumni homecoming on Feb. 26, 2005, at the GNC quadrangle in Guagua, Pampanga. Members of Class 1955 (golden jubilarians) will be honored during the event. Members of the GNC high school Class '55 are mostly "balikbayans" from the United States, Canada and Australia, where they have established themselves as highly successful professionals and businessmen. For further information, please call Antonio Lim at 833-5689, mobile phone 0917-4366956, or Nor S. Pineda at (045) 900-0425, mobile phone 0919-3021682.

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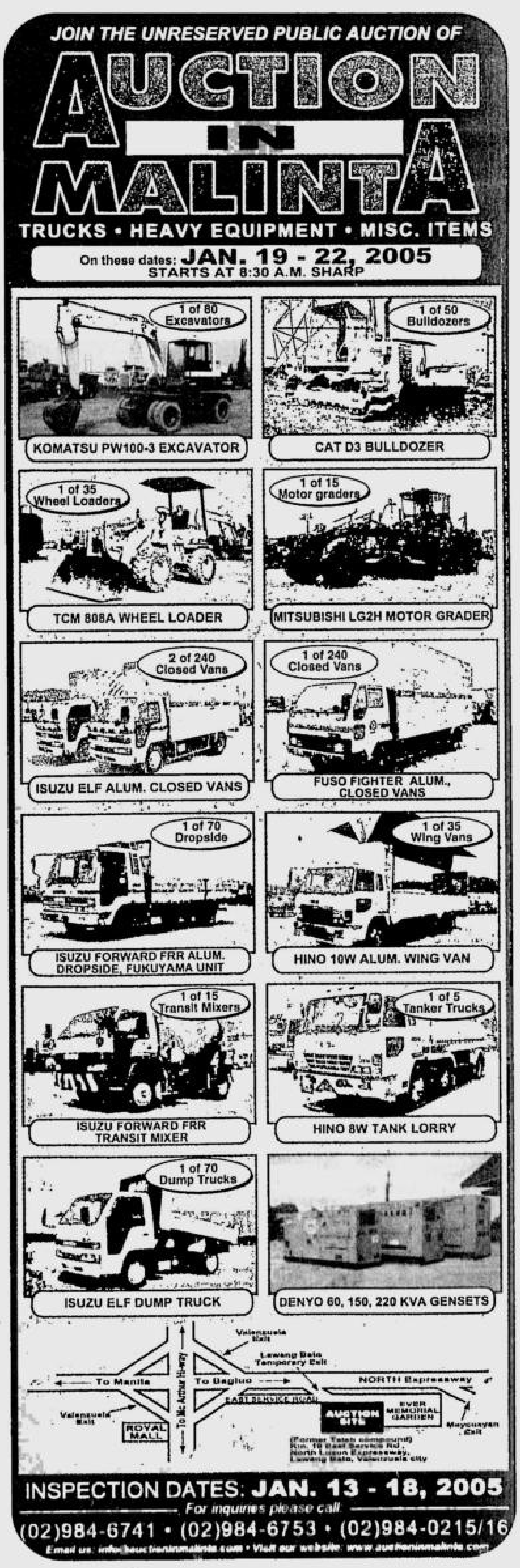

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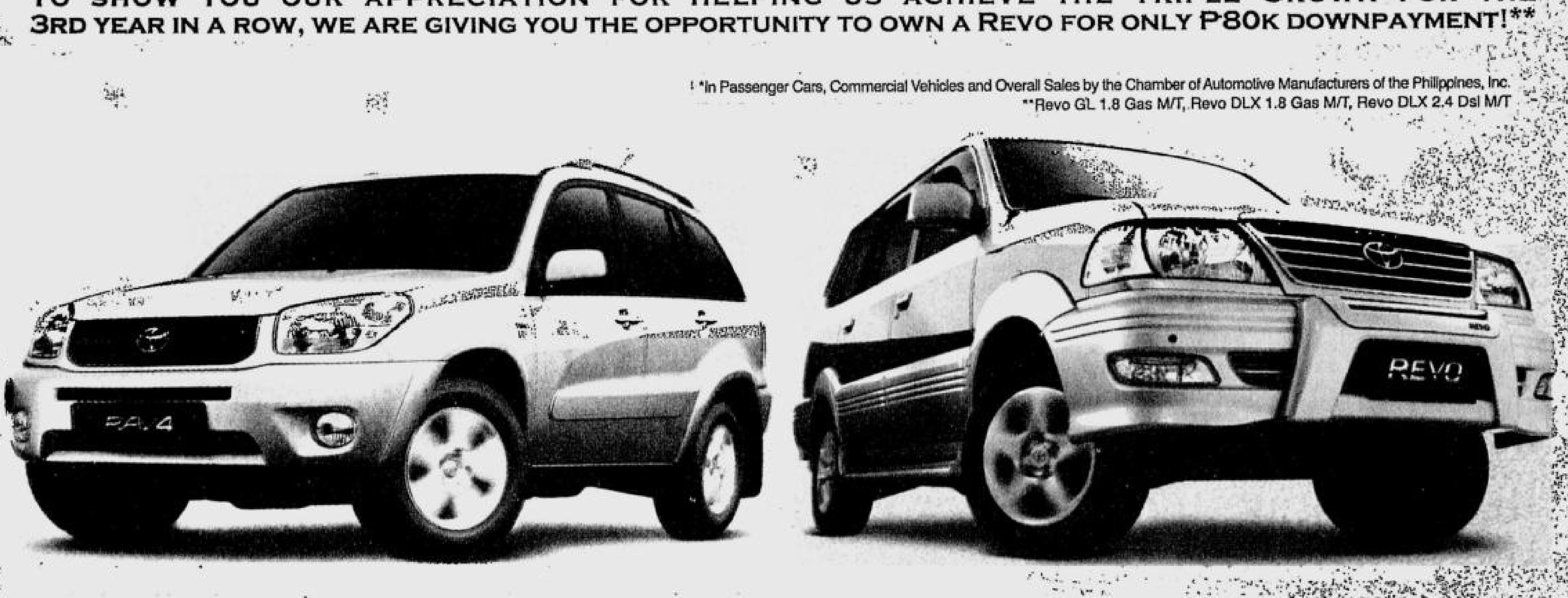

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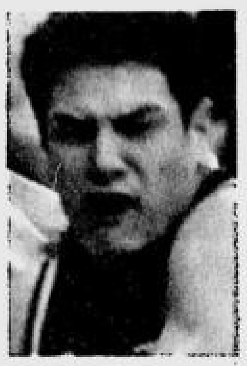
DELA CRUZ

32 PBA stars make it to RP pool

Reyes picks eight more from amateur ranks

By June Navarro

THIRTY-TWO standouts from the Philippine Basketball Association will form the core of the 40 players picked by national coach Vincent "Chot" Reyes to the Philippine team training pool yesterday.

Eight amateurs will complete the initial list of RP team candidates, who will undergo a series of fitness tests and interviews before plunging into practice at the end of the month.

Heading the elite group from where Reyes hopes to form a young, talented and dedicated men's national team for this year's Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) Championship are Barangay Ginebra's Jayjay Helterbrand and Eric Menk, Willie Miller of Talk 'N Text, Tony Dela Cruz of Shell and Nic Belasco of San Miguel Beer.

Aside from the players Reyes called as "his first five," Chot picked Danny Seigle, Danny Ildefonso and Dondon Hontiveros of San Miguel; Talk 'N Text's Jimmy Alapag, Mark Telan and Yancy De Ocampo; Rich Alvarez and Billy Mamaril of Shell; Barangay Ginebra's Mark Caguioa and Rommel Adducul; Noy Castillo, Kerby Raymundo and James Yap of Purefoods, Alaska's Don Allado, Brandon Cablay, Mike Cortez and Sonny Thoss; Sta. Lucia's Kenneth Duremdes and Dennis Espino; Renren Ritualo and Marc Pingris of FedEx, Red Bull Barako's Enrico Villanueva, Lordy Tugade and Junthy Valenzuela; and Coca-Cola's John Arigo, Ali Peek and Rafi Reavis.

"The selection was primarily based on the statistics and the experience of the players after a thorough consultation with the coaching staff," said Reyes, who has designated San Miguel Beer head coach Jong Uichico as one of his deputies.

Also appointed as deputies were Coca-Cola's Aboy Castro, Binky Favis of Barangay Ginebra and Boysie Zamar, who was hand-picked by the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

32 PBA STARS/ A24

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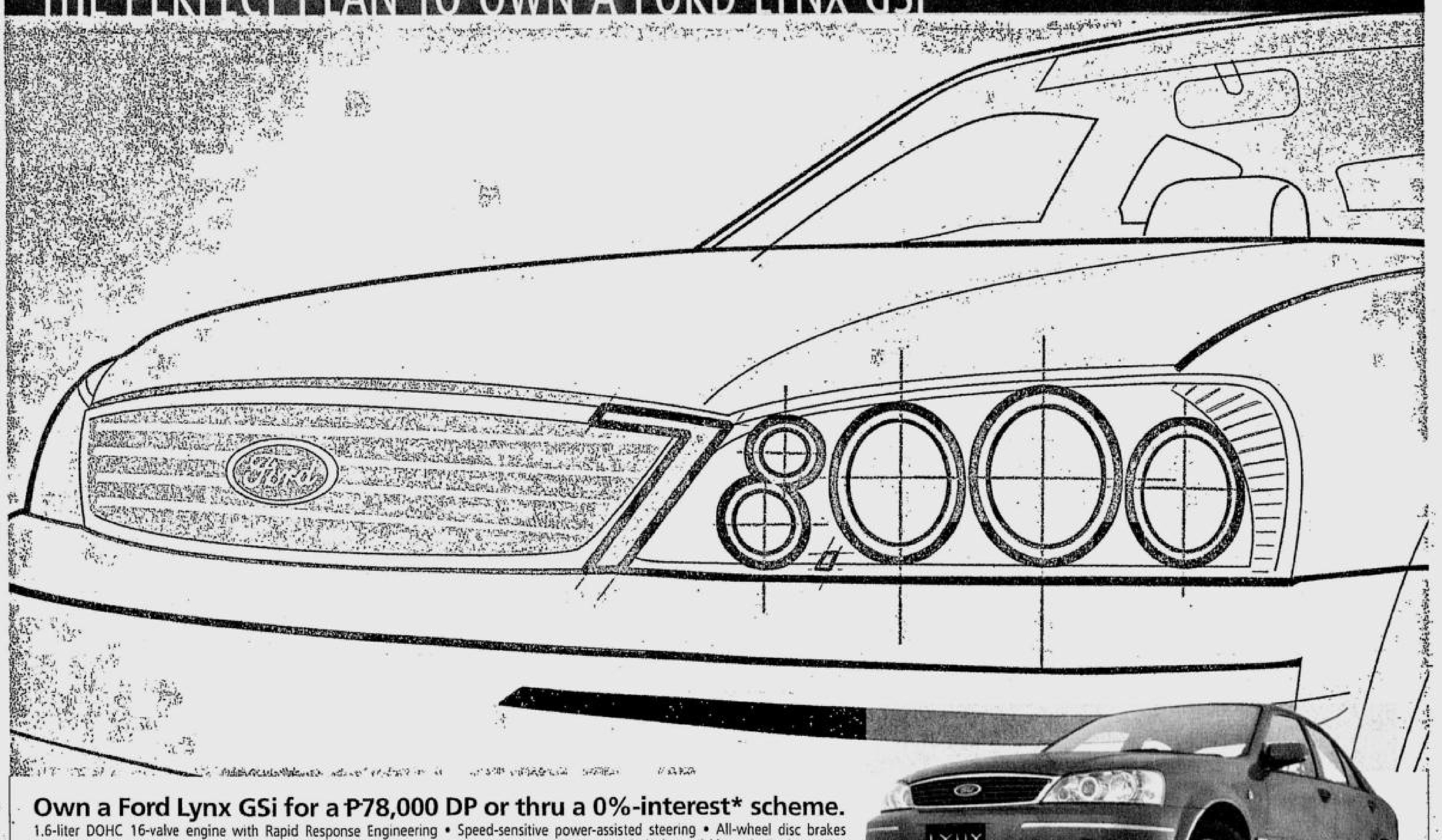

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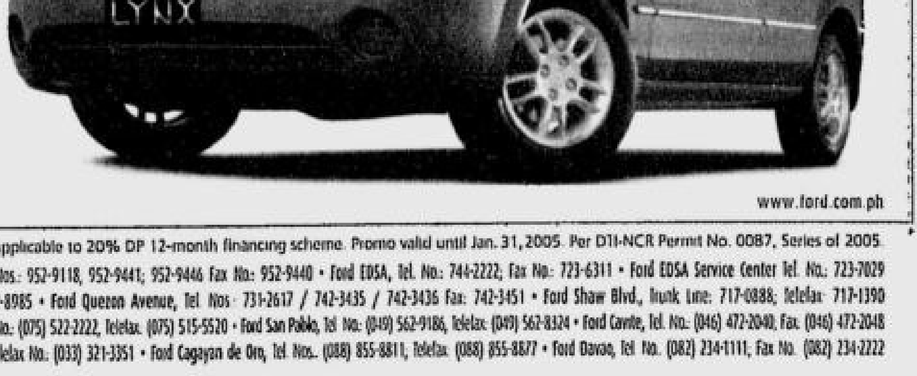

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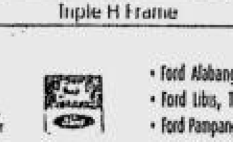
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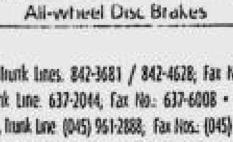
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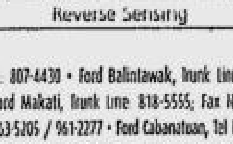
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PETRON

BANAL: Not easy.

Koy Banal expected parting with Tamaraws

By Jasmine W. Payo

SITTING on the bench of the Magnolia-FEU Wizards, coach Koy Banal was focused not only on the action on the floor. He was also observing the crowd wildly cheering for its home team in the PBL Open tournament at the jampacked FEU Gym.

The Wizards were on their way to a big win over collegiate rival ICTSI-La Salle last Saturday. It would be their second victory over the Archers since losing to them in the UAAP Finals.

It would have been a good payback for Banal. Instead, he felt sentimental.

"It was sad seeing the FEU community around," said Banal, who won't be back as head coach in this year's UAAP season. "It's not easy to leave FEU, especially the players."

FEU did not renew Banal's contract last Tuesday but offered him a consultant's job, which he turned down.

"I was told to think it over," said Banal, who steered FEU to the 2003 UAAP title and the 2004 PBL Unity Cup championship. "But it didn't feel right (serving as consultant). It's not appropriate. I don't think I can help that way."

"We're going in different directions," he added of the prospect of working with a new coaching staff. "If I would become a consultant, we have to be on the same page. We must have the same direction and have the same system."

The news shocked many, but it came as no surprise to Banal.

"There were already hints in the last UAAP season," he admitted. "I contemplated on it. I then made the decision to stay because the players convinced me that we make this year our last dance. But the offer (to become a consultant) came on Tuesday,"

Banal's busy schedule, which includes sitting as assistant coach of Purefoods in the PBA, was one of the main reasons cited by the FEU management.

"They said it was for the welfare of FEU," he noted. "They said I had no time but I did it in the last two years. We were champions in 2003 and last year we were one shot away (from winning)."

Banal also led FEU to three UAAP Finals appearances and four Final Four stints in five seasons.

Former FEU player Glenn Capacio and former FEU assistant coach Robert Flores are being tapped as possible replacements.

Beermen make it 8 in a row over SLR

GAMES TOMORROW (*Cuneta Astrodome*)
4:30 p.m.—Red Bull vs Shell*
7:20 p.m.—FedEx vs Alaska*
*with twice-to-beat advantage

By June Navarro

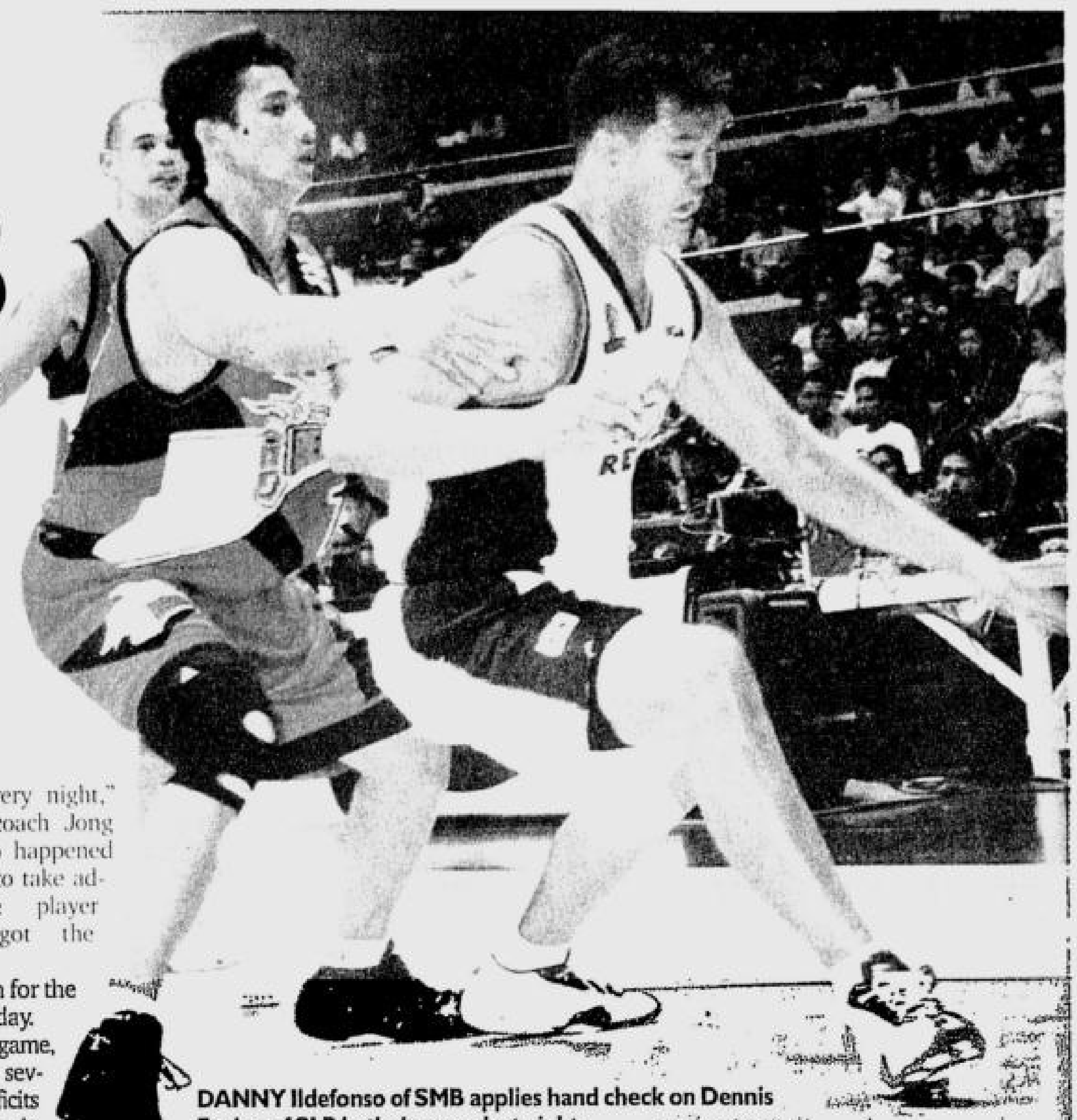
DANNY Seigle fired 25 points and Dorian Pena added 10 and 12 boards as San Miguel Beer subdued Sta. Lucia Realty, 98-84, for the eighth straight time last night in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Beermen have not lost to the Realtors since the 2003 Reinforced Conference after sweeping Sta. Lucia Realty in a best-of-five semifinal series.

"It doesn't really mean that we can beat Sta. Lucia every night," said San Miguel coach Jong Uichico. "It just so happened that we were able to take advantage of the player matchups and got the breaks."

The Beermen gun for the clincher on Wednesday.

In the second game, Purefoods overcame several double-digit deficits to beat Coca-Cola in overtime, 91-85, and take Game 1 of their series.



DANNY Ildefonso of SMB applies hand check on Dennis Espino of SLR in their game last night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The scores:

First Game

SAN MIGUEL 98—Seigle 25, Ildefonso 17, Belasco 17, Pena 10, Hontiveros 9, Villoria 8, Singson 6, Racela 6, Gamboa 0, Canlas 0, Mente 0.

STA. LUCIA 84—Duremdes 28, Espino 26, Cuan 6, Francisco 6, Aquino 5, Gumatay 4, Omolon 4, Fernandez 3, Locsin 2, Santos 0, Adriano 0, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 19-16, 45-36, 74-60, 98-84.

Second Game

PUREFOODS 91—Raymundo 15, Yap, 13, Simon 12, Limpot 11, Castillo 10, Yee 8, Artadi 7, Evangelista 6, Espinosa 5, Laure 4, Hrabak 0.

COCA-COLA 85—Abarrientos 15, Peek 14, Juinio 13, Arigo 11, Wainwright 10, Reavis 10, Avenido 4, Morano 4, Antonio 4, Lao 0.

Quarters: 22-24, 43-43, 65-63, 79-79, 91-85

YAP replaces Tubid.

Shell acquires Yap from Express

ROGER Yap, FedEx's reliable wingman, has been traded to the Shell Turbochargers for a first-round pick in this year's rookie draft.

FedEx-Air21 president Lito Alvarez and Shell governor Bobby Kanapi concluded the deal Saturday night, a day after the Turbochargers lost their bid for an outright entry into the semifinals by bowing to the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals.

The agreement will most likely give the Express at least two slots in the first round of the freshman selection while the Turbochargers get to immediately solve their problem in the backcourt following Ronald Tubid's injury.

"It was a nice move," said Shell coach Leo Austria. "Roger (Yap) can effectively fill the spot of Ronald (Tubid)."

For the Express, the move puts them ahead in the race to snag Filipino-American Anthony Washington, who is expected to become the top pick in the 2005 rookie draft in July.

Tubid aggravated a slow-healing pulled hamstring when he soared for a layup over Vic Pablo in the dying minutes of Shell's losing encounter against Talk 'N Text. *June Navarro*

Rosales, Pacquiao brightest in 2004

THE SPOTLIGHT falls on Jennifer Rosales and Manny Pacquiao come the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) Annual Awards Night, the way it did when the two made headlines in the year just passed.

The stylish Filipina golfer and the hard-punching Filipino southpaw have been named as Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year awardee, respectively by the country's oldest media organization for their outstanding exploits in 2004.

The 26-year-old Rosales scored a breakthrough win in the tough LPGA Tour with her triumph in the $1.6 million Fil-Chick A Championship in Stockbridge, Georgia, beating along the way some of the world's finest lady golfers including world No.1 Annika Sorenstam.

This marks the first time Rosales will be feted with the highest accolade given by the 90-member association and the first lady golfer to be honored after Dorothy Delasin in 2001.

Also 26, Pacquiao held Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez to a controversial split draw during their highly-anticipated 12-round bout for the World Boxing Association (WBA)/International Boxing Federation (IBF) featherweight title.

A costly error committed by one of the three judges who scored the fight denied the pride and joy of General Santos City a clear victory.

Pacquiao has been named PSA Athlete of the Year for the third straight time, making him only the second sports figure to achieve the feat after bowler Bong Coo from 1982 to 1984.

He also became one of the few athletes to win the award twice or more, joining the company of Coo and Paeng Nepomuceno, track star Lydia de Vega-Mercado, swimmer Eric Buhain, golfers Frankie Minoza and Delasin, boxer Luisito Espinosa and billiards icon Efren "Bata" Reyes.

Rosales and Pacquiao will lead the compact list of 65 awardees who made the honor roll of the Jan. 13 affair at the Manila Pavilion.

For inquiries, call PSA president Jimmy Cantor at 527-76-51, (0920) 9044199 or PSA treasurer Joe S. Antonio at 527-84-21.

Adducul gets RP slot that matters most

BARANGAY Ginebra's Romel Adducul holds the record for most stints with the national team among the current crop of Philippine Basketball Association players.

The 6-foot-6 Adducul has played for at least 16 national teams since his collegiate days in the mid-'90s with the San Sebastian College Stags in the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

And that's excluding several club tourneys both local and overseas where Adducul and his former amateur teams represented the country.

Adducul is the only Filipino dribbler to suit up twice for the Asian Basketball Confederation All-Stars—in 1997 (Seoul, South Korea) and 1999 (Fukuoka, Japan).

The Tuguegarao native also captured two Southeast Asian Basketball Association Most Valuable Player awards in the 1998 edition held in the country and in 2000 in Malaysia.

The three-time NCAA MVP played in the Southeast Asian Games thrice (1997 in Jakarta, 1999 in Brunei and 2001 in Kuala Lumpur) and saw action in the Seaba five times.

"I love playing for the national team and I never turned down any offer to play for the country in my 10 years as a competitive basketball player," said Adducul. "That's how committed I am for flag and country." June Navarro

ADDUCUL

32 PBA stars named . . .

From page A23

Besides Ateneo's LA Tenorio, La Salle's Mac Cardona, Far Eastern's Arwind Santos and Anthony Washington of Welcoat, NCAA rookie-MVP Gabby Espinas (PCU), Jay-R Reyes (Welcoat), UE's Niño Canaleta and Japeth Aguilar of Ateneo were included in the amateur roster.

Reyes said the players are all below 31 years old with the 6-foot-6 Aguilar the youngest at 17.

"The list is by no means final," said Reyes. "We will still trim it down before the first official practice of the team on Jan. 31."

The physical fitness program, to be held at the Moro Lorenzo gym in Ateneo, will measure the players' strength, quickness, agility, height, reach, stamina and body fat percentage, while interviews will determine their dedication to the team.

"It doesn't mean that the players excluded from the list are not the best or aren't qualified and there's no conscious effort to peg the number of players at 32," said Reyes.

"The coaching staff just felt that this is the solid list of players fit for the national team."

Stricken from the list were Alaska's Jeffrey Cariaso and Reynel Hugnatan, Victor Pablo of Talk 'N Text, Rodney Santos of Barangay Ginebra, Shell's Ronald Tubid, John Ferriols of FedEx and San Miguel's Olsen Racela, all of them among the top 30 players, statistics-wise, in the ongoing PBA conference.

Racela and Cariaso played for the last Asian Games team of PBA stars, coached by Uichico, who came close to beating South Korea before finishing fourth in the 2002 Asiad in Busan. The Koreans went on to win the cage crown over the Yao Ming-led China squad.

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NISSAN

Bata keeps unbeaten pool streak

EFREN "Bata" Reyes picked up two more victories on similar 11-7 scores and emerged as the only Filipino survivor in the winner's bracket of the UPA Pro Tour Championship at the Bicycle Club in Bell Gardens, California over the weekend.

The 50-year-old Reyes, known as "The Magician" because of his mystifying shotmaking, kept his streak going at the expense of four-time world champion Johnny Archer of the United States and Paul Potier of Canada.

With the win, the Filipino ace arranged a hot-seat match with former US Open champion Corey Deuel, who beat American compatriot Charlie Williams, 11-6, and defending UPA Tour titlist Mika Immonen of Finland, 11-8.

Reyes recovered from a 7-4 deficit before beating the Canadian champion Potier, who had earlier downed the heavily favored Ralf Souquet of Germany, 11–7.

Archer and Souquet will collide in the loser's bracket with the winner facing Mike Davis next.

Before losing to Deuel, Immonen had earlier drubbed reigning World Trickshot champ Mike Massey, 11-2, and Frankie Hernandez of the US, 11-2.

Meanwhile, Filipinos Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat and Santos Sambajon finally tasted defeat.

The 47-year-old Luat bowed to American Gabe Owen, 11-9, while Sambajon, who hails from Quezon and now lives in North Terrace, California, went down, 11-8, to Danny Basavich, conqueror of Filipino Francisco "Django" Bustamante, 11-10, in the second round.

Owen, who also downed Rodney Morris, 11-9, and Basavich, 11-6 winner over Mike Davis, will collide in another featured game in the winner's side.

Luat and Sambajon later bounced back with wins over Charlie Bryant, 11-7, and Dave Hemmah, 11-5, respectively, and will next face Troy Frank and Tony Robles.

Frank stayed alive at the expense of Robb Saez, 11-5, while Robles beat Max Eberle, 11-4.

If Luat and Sambajon prevail, they will face Immonen and Paul Potier, respectively, in the next round.

Despite the early loss, Bustamante remained in contention after demolishing Danny Petralba, 11-1, Cliff Joyner, 11-10, and Charlie Williams 11-5.

Bustamante's next foe is Frankie Hernandez, an 11-5 winner over Japanese-American Neil Fujiwara. If he wins, Bustamante gets to play Rodney Morris in the next round.

Filipino Jose "Amang" Parica earlier bowed out of the 59-man field after losing, 9-11, to Danny Kuykendall, who later went down to Archer, 3-11, in the next round.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

EFREN "Bata" Reyes is the last Filipino standing in the winners' bracket.

La Salle spikers halt Tigresses' win run at six

By Musong R. Castillo

GAMES TOMORROW (*Rizal Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs. San Sebastian
5 p.m.—PSC vs. Letran

LA SALLE'S Lady Archers outsteadied San Tomas in straight sets, 25-21, 25-21, 25-21, yesterday to snap the Tigresses' six-game winning streak and catch them at the top in the Shakey's V League at the Rizal Coliseum.

Powered by the long-legged, high-leaping sisters Michelle and Mayette Carolino, the Lady Archers got back at their opening-day tormentors in one hour and 23 minutes.

Santo Tomas' first loss in seven matches exposed a chink on its vaunted offense as top spikers Roxanne Pimentel and Mary Jane Balse were limited to a combined 17 markers.

La Salle devised a defensive strategy against Pimentel and held her to just 10 points, only four coming from attacks. Balse, the Most Valuable Player in the first conference, struck for just seven.

Michelle finished with 19 points while Mayette tossed in 10 to lead La Salle which won its sixth consecutive match.

Kate Co Yu Kang and Venus Bernal combined for 25 points to pace the defending champion Tigresses.

A Lyceum side hungry for respect, meanwhile, overcame a two-set deficit to pound out a pulsating 21-25, 22-25, 25-21, 25-16, 15-12 victory over Far Eastern in the first game.

The Lady Pirates won in a little over two hours to grab fourth place with five games left in the eliminations.

At 3-4, Lyceum barged into the magic circle of four teams that will make the playoffs, with the top three practically conceded to Santo Tomas, La Salle and the scrappy PSC Lady Legends.

Far Eastern lost for the sixth time in seven games and dropped to a share of last place with San Sebastian.

Lyceum reinforcements Michell Laborte and Cristina Salak held the team together in the searing rally, playing splendid backup to attackers Dahlia Cruz and the high-leaping Angelica Bigcas.

Salak was credited with 15 points like Laborte, while Cruz pelted the Lady Tams with 16 points, 11 coming from kills.

Bigcas, the best spiker in the first conference but who is playing with a hurting rotator calf, chipped in 11.

Ruby Mhay Rovira led the Lady Tams with 24 points.

Mumar remembered

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THE LATE Lauro "The Fox" Mumar, who will be one of the honorees in this year's PSA Awards Night at the Manila Pavilion on Jan. 13, was a controversial figure in Philippine basketball.

At one time, he was linked to a game-fixing scandal while playing for Letran in the NCAA cage wars in 1950. He was also banned for life by officials of the defunct Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation "for failing to honor an international commitment, a conduct unbecoming of an athlete of national stature" after he missed the flight to Brazil where the Philippines was scheduled to play in the World Basketball Championship in Rio de Janeiro in 1954.

In the 1950 NCAA cagefest, Mumar led Letran's famous Murder Inc. team to the NCAA championship, but the victory was tainted by a game-fixing scandal. Letran could have won the NCAA title by a sweep, but it was beaten by underdog San Beda in Game 10.

Mumar was suspected of throwing that game by betting for San Beda and was subsequently dropped from the Letran roster.

However, Mumar emerged unscathed as there was no single complaint filed against him in any court of law to prove that he was guilty of any wrongdoing.

Born to a poor family from Tabilon, Bohol, Mumar honed his skills playing *tatluhan* (three-on-three) sandlot basketball where he developed his stamina and cunning. He made his cage debut for Cebu's San Carlos College (now San Carlos University) which won the first postwar National Intercollegiate championship in Manila in 1946. Then in 1948, 1949 and 1950, Mumar spearheaded Manila Ports Terminal in the defunct Micaa (Manila Industrial-Commercial Athletic Association) series.

Mumar's first international stint was in the 1948 London Olympic Games under renowned coach Dionisio "Chito" Calvo. The Philippines placed 12th then. Upon his return to Manila, Mumar enrolled at Letran College where he sparked the dreaded Murder Inc. team to the NCAA title in 1950. He also saw action for the national team that won the Asian Games gold medal in 1951 in New Delhi and 1954 in Manila, capping his magnificent career as team captain of the Philippine quintet that placed third in the 1954 World Basketball Championship in Rio de Janeiro.

But did you know that the Philippines' most successful campaign in the world cagefest did not start on a bright note? The team left without its team captain, who failed to show up at the airport, resulting in his suspension by the PAAF pashas.

In his defense, Mumar said he had hoped that his parents would send him money from Bohol, but his parents, impoverished as they were, failed to raise the funds.

"I told basketball officials that I'd just follow the team as soon as the money arrives, but they did not listen. They suspended me without due process."

Because it had become an instant national issue, the old Congress entered the picture. The late Arsenio Lacson, then a congressman, and former Sen. Lorenzo Tañada denounced "the oppression of the oppressed (Mumar) by the high lords of basketball."

The late President Ramon Magsaysay, champion of the poor, also took a fatherly concern by summoning Mumar twice to Malacañang.

"*Ako po ay mahirap lamang* (I'm just a poor boy, Mr. President)," Mumar said. "The last time I joined the national team to the London Olympics in 1948, all I had in my pocket was $2. Right now, I have not even paid my apartment rent."

Magsaysay took pity on Mumar.

In a public hearing at the Manila Hotel, the PAAF board reversed its earlier decision suspending Mumar. Jubilant fans then launched a campaign to raise money for Mumar, who, when he finally left for Brazil, had more well-wishers at the airport than when the national team itself left for the world cagefest.

That 12-man Philippine team, coached by the legendary Herminio "Herr" Silva, was perhaps the strongest ever assembled in living memory. In the team were six Olympians—Carlos Loyzaga, Florentino Bautista, Pons Saldaña, Mariano Tolentino, Antonio Genato (Helsinki 1952); and Mumar, (London 1948)—and six collegiate and commercial players—Francisco Rabat, Ateneo; Bayani Amador, FEU; Rafael Barredo, San Beda-San Miguel; Ramon Manulat and Nap Flores, UST; and Ben Francisco, Philippine Air Lines.

The team was tall by standards of that period with an average height of six feet, while the players' average age was 23. Mumar was the oldest at 29 and Rabat the youngest at 18.

RECAH Trinidad is on emergency leave and unable to write his column, Bare Eye. ***Ed***

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2003 Toyota Corolla GLi M/T	545,000.00	18,754.00	**5,626.00**	13,128.00
2004 Toyota Corolla Altis J M/T	655,000.00	22,262.00	**6,679.00**	15,583.00
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2002 Mitsubishi Lancer GLXi A/T	490,000.00	17,001.00	**5,100.00**	11,901.00
2003 Mitsubishi Adventure Sport	645,000.00	15,869.68	**4,760.90**	11,108.77
2003 Mitsubishi Pajero A/T	1,200,000.00	28,073.00	**8,422.00**	19,651.00
1999 Nissan Exalta M/T	360,000.00	12,855.00	**3,857.00**	8,999.00
1999 Nissan Frontier 4x4 A/T	535,000.00	13,319.00	**3,996.00**	9,323.00
2000 Nissan Patrol 3.0 4x4 A/T	1,200,000.00	28,073.00	**8,422.00**	19,651.00
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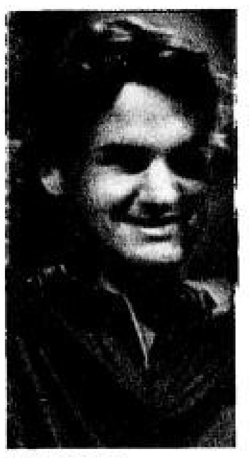
Federer clips foe, captures Qatar tilt

DOHA—World No. 1 Roger Federer continued his spectacular run at the Qatar Open by beating Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia, 6-3, 6-1, in the final on Saturday.


FEDERER AP

Federer's 21st consecutive victory brought him his 23rd win in 31 finals and his 14th final triumph in a row since 2003.

The Swiss top seed dominated the sixth-seeded Ljubicic from the start, putting on a scintillating display of accurate serves, fluent backhands and punishing forehands.

"I was expecting a tough match because he (Ljubicic) is a big guy with a good serve," Federer told reporters.

"He has been a dangerous proposition to all big players. But as it turned out, it was an easy match for me.

"But in a way it was a surprise win, too, for me because at the start of a new season you really don't know where to focus—on your backhand, forehand or serves. It will take a few matches to know where you stand."

Ljubicic, who had beaten Federer three times in six meetings, folded as the pressure mounted and made too many unforced errors.

Federer broke Ljubicic in the sixth game to jump to a 4-2 lead and held his next two service games to take the first set 6-3 in 35 minutes.

The second set lasted only 27 minutes as the holder of three grand slam titles blasted his opponent off the court.

Federer broke Ljubicic in the first and fifth games as the Croatian continued to make unforced errors.

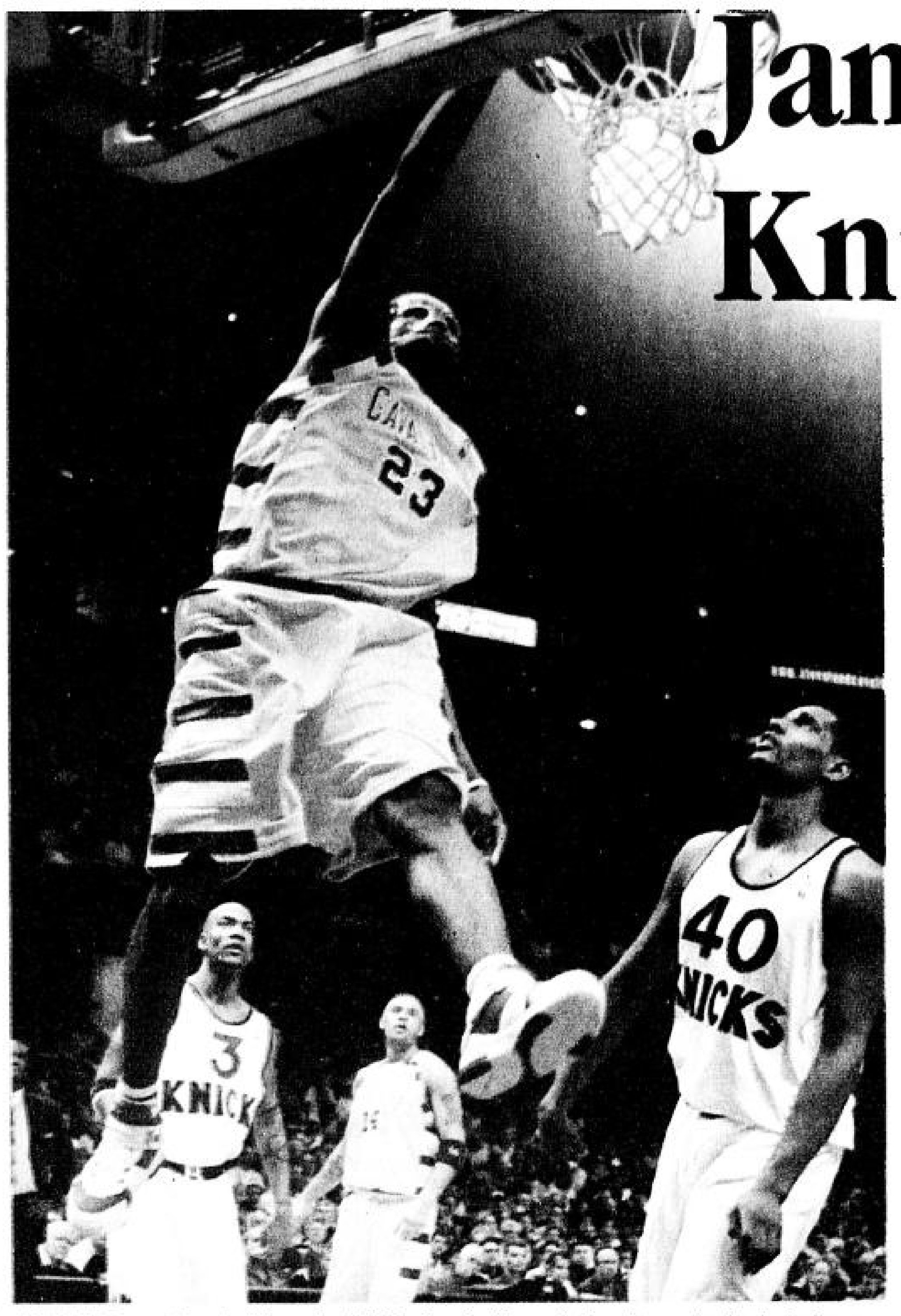
Federer's victory ended the poor record of top seeds in the tournament, except in 1995 when Sweden's Stefan Edberg won the title.

Ljubicic paid tribute to his opponent.

"I didn't serve well at all," he said. "I was running around a lot in the first set, but as the match progressed it became increasingly difficult for me.

"He (Federer) knows how to deal with each player and has a knack of winning big points. He is a great player." *Reuters*

James plays ru Knicks; Horne


WEARING a mask and a "throwback" Cleveland uniform, LeBron James dunks the ball over Kurt Thomas of the New York Knicks, during the first quarter of their game. REUTERS

CLEVELAND—LeBron James hit his first eight shots and scored 22 points to power the Cleveland Cavaliers past the New York Knicks, 104-79, on Saturday for their third straight victory.

James, in his fifth game wearing a clear mask to protect a broken left cheekbone, played only 32 minutes and shot 10-for-14 from the field—including two resounding slams early in the second quarter.

"We wanted to protect our house and make sure people know when they come to Cleveland now they are playing a basketball team," James said.

Lucious Harris scored a season-high 16 points as Cleveland had five players in double figures and improved to 13-3 at home, 20-12 overall.

Tim Thomas scored 17 points for New York, which dropped its record under .500 (16-17) with its fourth consecutive loss.

"We didn't play very well at all," Knicks coach Lenny Wilkens said. "They ran a clinic on us."

Cleveland built a 67-36 halftime lead and coasted to its largest victory margin over the Knicks. The previous mark of 24 was set in 1976, when the Cavaliers wore the same striped gold home uniforms that they donned in this "throwback game" before a national television audience.

The Knicks' Moochie Norris, Stephon Marbury, Allan Houston, Vin Baker and Nazr Mohammed all donated $1,000 to UNICEF's tsunami relief fund for each point they scored—a total of $32,000.

In San Antonio, Bruce Bowen held Carmelo Anthony in check and made three 3-pointers in the fourth quarter to help the San Antonio Spurs beat the Denver Nuggets, 99-90.

Anthony, who entered the game averaging a team-leading 21.7 points, was limited to eight points on 4-for-15 shooting. He sat out most of the third quarter with foul trouble while the Nuggets rallied to pull within 72-68.

Manu Ginobili scored 22 points for San Antonio, while Tony Parker had 20 and Duncan 19. Bowen made all five of his shots in the second half and finished with 17 points, and Rasho Nesterovic grabbed 11 rebounds.

The loss was Denver's ninth in the past 10 games, while the Spurs have won 12 of their last 14.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored seven of his season-high 40 points in the final 2:19 to lead Washington over Minnesota, 117-114, for its fourth consecutive victory.

Larry Hughes had 28 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists for the Wizards, who at 19-13 are off to their best start in 20 seasons.

Kevin Garnett, who finished with 25 points and 19 rebounds, scored 12 in the fourth quarter and gave the Timberwolves a 112-106 lead on a turnaround jumper with 2:02 remaining. But the Timberwolves couldn't

Clippers activate Kittles, freeze Jaric

LOS ANGELES—The Los Angeles Clippers placed guard Marko Jaric on the injured list prior to Saturday's game against Phoenix and activated guard Kerry Kittles from the IL.

Kittles, who was acquired by the Clippers in an offseason trade with New Jersey, has played in just five games this season.

The eighth-year veteran missed the first 10 contests due to a sore right knee and has been sidelined since Dec. 21 with a bulging disc in his lower back.

The 30-year-old Kittles is averaging 5.6 points and 2.4 assists thus far.

Jaric has not played since Dec. 19 because of a stress fracture in his right foot and is expected to out a minimum of three more weeks.

He had started the Clippers' first 23 games and averaged 11.0 points and 6.4 assists.

In Cleveland, Ohio, the Cleveland Cavaliers Saturday activated forward/center Scott Williams from the injured list.

He played just four minutes in a 104-79 loss to New York and posted one rebound and one assist.

Williams was sidelined for the past five games with left patella tendinitis.

He has played in 18 games this year.

Meanwhile, the club placed center DeSagana Diop on the injured list with a bruised left elbow.

Diop is posting just 0.9 points and 2.7 boards per outing this year.

The Cavs also announced that rookie guard Luke Jackson will remain on the injured list with back spasms and could be sidelined for the rest of the season.

Meanwhile, Philadelphia's Allen Iverson continued to lead the league in scoring through Saturday's game, posting an average of 28.9 points per game.

Minesotta's Kevin Garnett leads the rebounds department with 14.8 boards per game, while Phoenix playmaker tops the league in assists with 11.1 per outing. *Reuters*

NBA STA

EASTERN CO
Standings
Atlantic Division
New York
Philadelphia
Boston
New Jersey
Toronto
Central Division
Cleveland
Detroit
Indiana
Chicago
Milwaukee
Southeast Division
Miami
Washington
Orlando
Charlotte
Atlanta
WESTERN CO
Southwest Division
San Antonio
Dallas
Memphis
Houston
New Orleans
Northwest Division
Seattle
Minnesota
Portland
Denver
Utah
Pacific Division
Phoenix
Sacramento
LA Lakers
LA Clippers
Golden State

Swiss bags Aussie title

ADELAIDE, Australia—Second-seeded Joachim Johansson of Sweden won his second career title Sunday with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Taylor Dent at the Australian men's hardcourt tennis championships.

His first tournament win was at Memphis in 2004, a breakthrough year in which he also made the semifinals of the US Open and moved from 113th in the rankings to No. 11.

Fifth-seeded Dent survived three break points in the fifth game of the match, but managed to keep the first set on serve until 5-5, when Johansson gained the first break.

Johansson took the score from deuce to a break point on a backhand return winner, then hit another crosscourt backhand return winner on the next point to take a 6-5 lead.

Johansson double-faulted on set point but followed that up with an ace to take the opening set.

He broke Dent's serve again in the third game of the second set. Up 5-3, he finished the match by again breaking serve, blazing a forehand return winner to complete the victory on his fourth match point.

JOHANSSON: Straight-sets victory. AFP

Johansson, 22, is the boyfriend of Jaslyn Hewitt, Lleyton Hewitt's sister. Johansson spent several weeks leading up to the tournament in Adelaide, with Lleyton Hewitt as a practice partner.

Hewitt was beaten by Dent in the quarterfinals at Adelaide. *AP*

Paradorn gains Chennai final

MADRAS, India—Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand beat Tomas Zib of the Czech Republic, 7-6 (5), 6-3, on Saturday to reach his fourth straight final at the Chennai Open and will play defending champion Carlos Moya for the title.

Top-seeded Moya hit 13 aces and defeated Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (2), in an all-Spanish semifinal.

Moya, the 1998 French Open champion, is trying to become the first player to win consecutive titles at the Chennai Open, which started in 1996.

Paradorn won the hardcourt tune-up for the Australian Open in 2003 and was the runner-up in 2002 and 2004.

"Making the final is always a great feeling," Paradorn said. "It's again a nice way to start the year… There's one more match to go and that's the final. I sure fancy my chances."

The second-seeded Thai player is ranked 27th. Moya is ranked No. 5.

"I'm sure we'll give the crowd something to cheer about," Moya said.

Zib and Garcia-Lopez were both trying to reach an ATP Tour final for the first time.

Garcia-Lopez, after dropping serve to lose the first set, broke Moya in the second and eighth games of the second to even the set score. After one service break each, the pair went to the tiebreaker in which Moya served better.

"In tight matches the experienced player has an advantage," said Moya.

Zib matched Paradorn until 5-5 in the tiebreaker, when the Thai took charge. *AP*

VIEW FROM ABOVE: France's Kevin Arnoud carves a solitary silhouette against the blue sky as he soars above the Karwendel mountains and the city of Seefeld during the ski jumping competition at the Nordic Combined skiing World Cup event in Seefeld, Austria. REUTERS

Ace highlights Estuesta comeback

By Jong Arcano

MARY Grace Estuesta needed just one memorable round to convince herself she's still got a lot of playing years left in the professional tour.

Shaking off the cobwebs from a golf career that she abandoned three years ago, the 36-year-old Estuesta came out of retirement with a 16th place showing yesterday in the $130,000 Taiwan Open, the launching leg of the new Ladies Asian Golf Tour at the Royal Kuanshi Golf Club in Hsinchu, Taiwan.

The impressive finish secured for Estuesta stints in two major legs of the Asian Tour, the $200,000 Singapore Masters and $400,000 Thailand Open that will be co-sanctioned by the European Ladies Tour.

The field in Taiwan included former and present LPGA players from Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Australia and the United States as well as three other RP bets.

Cut

Filipinas Ria Quiazon, Heidi Chua and Sylvia Torres, however, all failed to make the 36-hole cut.

Before Jenny Rosales and Dorothy Delasin made their mark in the LPGA, it was Estuesta who broke the barrier for Philippine women's golf by becoming the first local lady pro to campaign in Europe about eight years ago.

One of the high points of that three-year stint in Europe was a close miss for the title in the Vienna Open in Austria.

Hole-in-one

It was a three-under-par 69 highlighted by a hole-in-one on the third hole in the second round Saturday that turned things around for Estuesta, who hit the comeback trail with a four-over-76. Organizers had actually offered a Jaguar for an ace but it was on another par-3 hole, the 17th.

"I just felt I needed a big round to make it and my game just clicked that day. More than anything else, shooting under par despite the tough conditions really made me believe that I've got some good years left in the tour," the Unilever-sponsored Estuesta said.

"After having assured myself of tournaments the next two months, I think there's no more turning back," she said.

She was actually still in contention for a top 10 finish until she bogeyed her last three holes while battling the biting cold and settled for her worst round of 78.

The new Asian Tour has opened opportunities for Estuesta and other local bets who need to fine-tune their games before attempting to play in the LPGA.

Estuesta next plays the Taiwan-Japan Friendship Cup starting Thursday and then the Wu Yi championship in China Jan 20-22. The Singapore Masters will be on Feb. 2-5 and the Thailand Open on March 31-April 3.

ESTUESTA: Secures stints to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

de host to NY ts sting Kings

close out the Wizards and lost their seventh consecutive road game.

In Orlando, Florida, Grant Hill scored 22 points as Orlando won its third straight game by holding off New Jersey's frantic comeback in a 104-101 triumph.

The Nets, trailing by 19 early in the fourth quarter, cut the deficit to two with 10 seconds remaining on Jason Kidd's fourth 3-pointer of the period.

Kidd had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his first triple-double of the season and 60th of his career.

After the Nets fouled, Cuttino Mobley's free throws put the Magic back up by four. He made six foul shots in the final 26 seconds to finish with 19 points.

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki had 34 points and 13 rebounds, and Michael Finley added a season-high 33 to lead Dallas to a franchise-best 74.3 percent of shots in the first half, then to a 121-101 cruise over Indiana.

The Mavs led 77-55 at halftime. By contrast, Indiana has allowed 77 or less in two full games this season.

In New Orleans, Baron Davis had his first triple-double in more than two seasons, helping the New Orleans end a 10-game losing streak with a 121-117 overtime victory over Sacramento.

Davis scored 26 points, tied a career high with 17 assists, and grabbed his 10th rebound late in overtime to ice the Hornets' third win of the season.

Rookie JR Smith tied a career high with 23 points for New Orleans, hitting four 3-pointers to go with several acrobatic inside moves.

Peja Stojakovic scored 37 points on 13-of-23 shooting, with 22 points coming after halftime, for the Kings. Chris Webber had 22 points and 13 rebounds, while Brad Miller had 14 points and 16 rebounds.

In Chicago, Kirk Hinrich scored 22 points and tied a career high with 14 assists to lead the Chicago past Boston, 102-91, for its ninth win in 12 games.

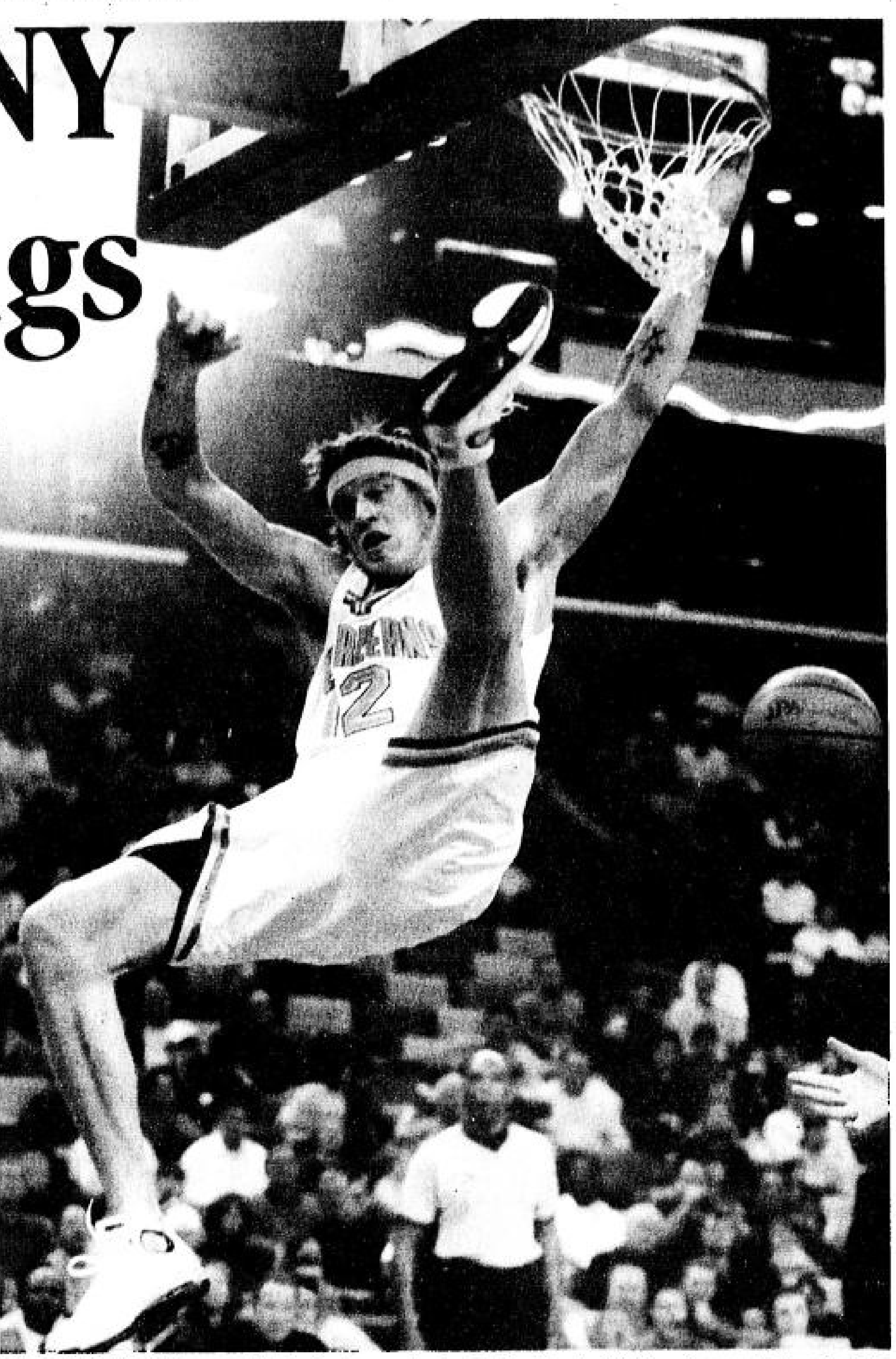
Othella Harrington, in a rare start, matched a season high with 19 points on 9-for-12 shooting and grabbed a season-high 10 rebounds for the Bulls, who surged ahead with a 13-0 third-quarter run. Chicago rookie Luol Deng also had 19 points.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 26 points, including two clinching free throws with 4.8 seconds left as Milwaukee nipped Utah, 89-86, and sent the Jazz to their ninth straight loss.

Mike James made a layup with 20.8 seconds left to give the Bucks an 87-86 lead. Milwuakee, which trailed by 10 points with 10:24 left in the fourth quarter, won its third consecutive game.

In Los Angeles, Joe Johnson scored 23 points and Phoenix matched its victory total for last season after just 33 games with a 108-91 rout of the Los Angeles Clippers.

Shawn Marion had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Suns, who have won five straight and 25 of 27. They lead the league with a 29-4 record, the best start in the franchise's 37-year history. Last season, Phoenix went 29-53, its third-worst record. *AP*



NEW ORLEANS Hornets' Chris Andersen dunks during the first half on the way to leading his team to an upset of the Sacramento Kings in New Orleans. AP

Beltran rejects Astros, eyes Mets

NEW YORK—Carlos Beltran's agent was trying to finalize a contract with the New York Mets early Sunday after letting the deadline for the speedy center fielder to re-sign with the Houston Astros pass without an agreement.

The Mets, who haven't made the playoffs since 2000, were trying to pull off a coup for the second time this offseason. They lured three-time Cy Young pitching award winner Pedro Martinez from the Boston Red Sox last month with a $53 million, four-year deal.

Both the Mets and the Astros spoke throughout Saturday with Beltran's agent, Scott Boras. Houston had to sign him by midnight or lose rights until May 1 under baseball rules because he finished the season with the Astros, became a free agent and rejected the team's offer of salary arbitration. The Mets and other teams did not have that restriction.

Just after the deadline passed, Boras said he was still negotiating with New York, and the sides kept on talking after the deadline passed, trying to put an agreement in writing.

Houston was disappointed it couldn't keep Beltran, who led the Astros within one win of their first World Series appearance.

"Scott called us to let us know they were going to go in a different direction," Astros general manager Tim Purpura said.

There was no immediate comment from the Mets.

Ruben Sierra, also facing the deadline, decided to remain with the New York Yankees, agreeing to a $1.5 million, one-year contract. Backup first baseman Dave McCarty stayed with the Boston Red Sox, agreeing to a minor league deal that would pay him $550,000 if he is added to the major league roster.

Pitcher Pedro Astacio (Boston) and catcher Brent Mayne (Los Angeles) also let the deadline pass.

In other free-agent news, the Cleveland Indians finalized their $7 million, one-year contract with Kevin Millwood. The 30-year-old right-hander has three seasons with at least 17 wins and has pitched more than 200 innings four times but was slowed last year by elbow problems.

"I'm not real worried about it," Millwood said. "If I was at a point right now that I felt I wouldn't be able to pitch all year, I probably wouldn't have signed."

While talking with Beltran, the Mets agreed to a one-year contract with South Korean left-hander Dae Sung Koo, who pitched in the 2000 Olympics and spent the last four years with the Orix BlueWave in Japan's Pacific League. *AP*

NDINGS

NFERENCE

W	L	PCT	GB
6	17	.485	-
5	17	.469	.1/2
5	19	.441	11/2
2	21	.364	4
2	22	.353	41/2
0	12	.625	-
8	14	.563	2
6	15	.516	31/2
3	18	.419	6
2	19	.387	71/2
7	8	.771	-
9	13	.594	61/2
8	14	.563	71/2
	22	.267	161/2
	26	.161	20

NFERENCE

W	L	PCT	GB
8	7	.800	-
2	10	.688	41/2
8	17	.514	10
6	17	.485	11
	29	.094	231/2
3	8	.742	-
7	15	.531	61/2
4	17	.452	9
4	18	.438	91/2
1	24	.314	14
9	4	.879	-
1	11	.656	71/2
7	14	.548	11
6	16	.500	121/2
1	22	.333	18

Giants raise funds for tsunami aid

SAN FRANCISCO—The San Francisco Giants raised $109,650 for the tsunami relief effort through a two-day silent auction on the team's website that included a personal meeting in the dugout with Barry Bonds.

There also were four other "once-in-a-lifetime" experiences available in the auction that ended late Friday.

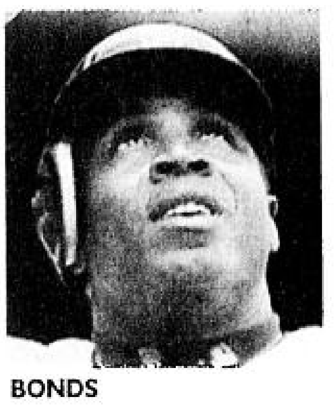
All the funds are going to organizations doing tsunami disaster relief work in South Asia. The winners of each item will be able to direct the money to the charity of their choice.

The meeting with Bonds went for $30,200 and will give the winner and three guests the opportunity to sit with the slugger in the Giants' dugout before a game this season and have a group picture taken. The four will also get tickets to the game and the opportunity to watch batting practice from the dugout.

The other four experiences were throwing out the first pitch on opening day (winning bid $26,400), an all-expenses paid trip to spring training in Arizona for four ($25,050), the chance to swing at 10 pitches off a Giants starting pitcher ($14,975), and a pregame breakfast with manager Felipe Alou ($13,025).

Bonds also is making a donation through his foundation, equally dividing the funding between UNICEF and AmeriCares.

"Our hearts go out to all those affected by this tremendous tragedy and we should all come together to make every effort to donate in some capacity," said Bonds, the seven-time NL MVP. *AP*



BONDS

San Beda scores football rout

Games Today
(Phil. Navy Field 1,
Ft. Bonifacio, Taguig)
9:30 a.m.—JRU vs PCU (jrs.)
11:30 a.m.—CSJL vs MIT (jrs.)
1:30 p.m.—UPHDS vs SBC (jrs)

COLLEGE of St. Benilde and San Beda College chalked up merciless routs over their opponents in both the juniors and seniors divisions for a stunning start to their NCAA Season 80 football campaign at the Philippine Navy Football Field in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City Saturday.

In the opening matches at 9:30 a.m., the senior varsity of San Beda College trampled over their Jose Rizal University counterparts in Field 1, 19-0.

The College of St. Benilde juniors, on the other hand, thrashed the University of Perpetual Help Dalta System in Field 2, 20-0.

The San Beda juniors then followed up with a 5-0 win over Mapua Institute of Technology at 11:30 a.m. in Field 2.

St. Benilde seniors dealt Mapua a 4-1 defeat in Field 1.

Philippine Christian University juniors completed the string of lopsided victories with a 6-1 conquest of Colegio de San Juan de Letran.

The tournament, hosted by College of St. Benilde, will resume today with three juniors matches pitting JRU versus PCU at 9:30 a.m., CSJL vs MIT at 11:30 a.m. and UPHDS vs SBC at 1:30 p.m.

Three other matches are scheduled on Thursday, all in the juniors division.

All matches will be held at the Philippine Navy Field 1 in Taguig City.

two events.

Hewitt hits coach's critics

SYDNEY—Australia's Lleyton Hewitt has supported Roger Rasheed amid criticism of his coach in the lead-up to this month's Australian Open.

Hewitt, bidding to become the first Australian male to win his national open since Mark Edmondson in 1976, Sunday credited Rasheed as a major reason for his return to the top three of men's tennis.

Hewitt's decision to split with Jason Stoltenberg after the 2003 French Open and appoint Rasheed, his former conditioner, as head coach was questioned at the time.

Rasheed copped most of the flak when Hewitt bombed out of that year's Wimbledon in the first round when he was the world No. 1, top seed and defending champion.

But the world No. 3 said the criticism of Rasheed was unfair and undeserved.

"It was obviously tough at the start when people wanted to hop on and stick a few knives into his back and it's been fantastic to see us bounce back well over the last year and a half and just keep the knockers down for a while," Hewitt said ahead of his title defense at the Sydney International this week.

Hewitt said Rasheed's work ethic surpassed even that of Stoltenberg and former coach Darren Cahill, who guided him to his maiden grand slam title and the world No. 1 ranking in 2001.

"I've really enjoyed every minute I've spent with Roger," Hewitt said Sunday. "I love his company. He's a great guy, a great guy to have around and he's really been a pleasure to work with." *AFP*

'E-classes' listing extended

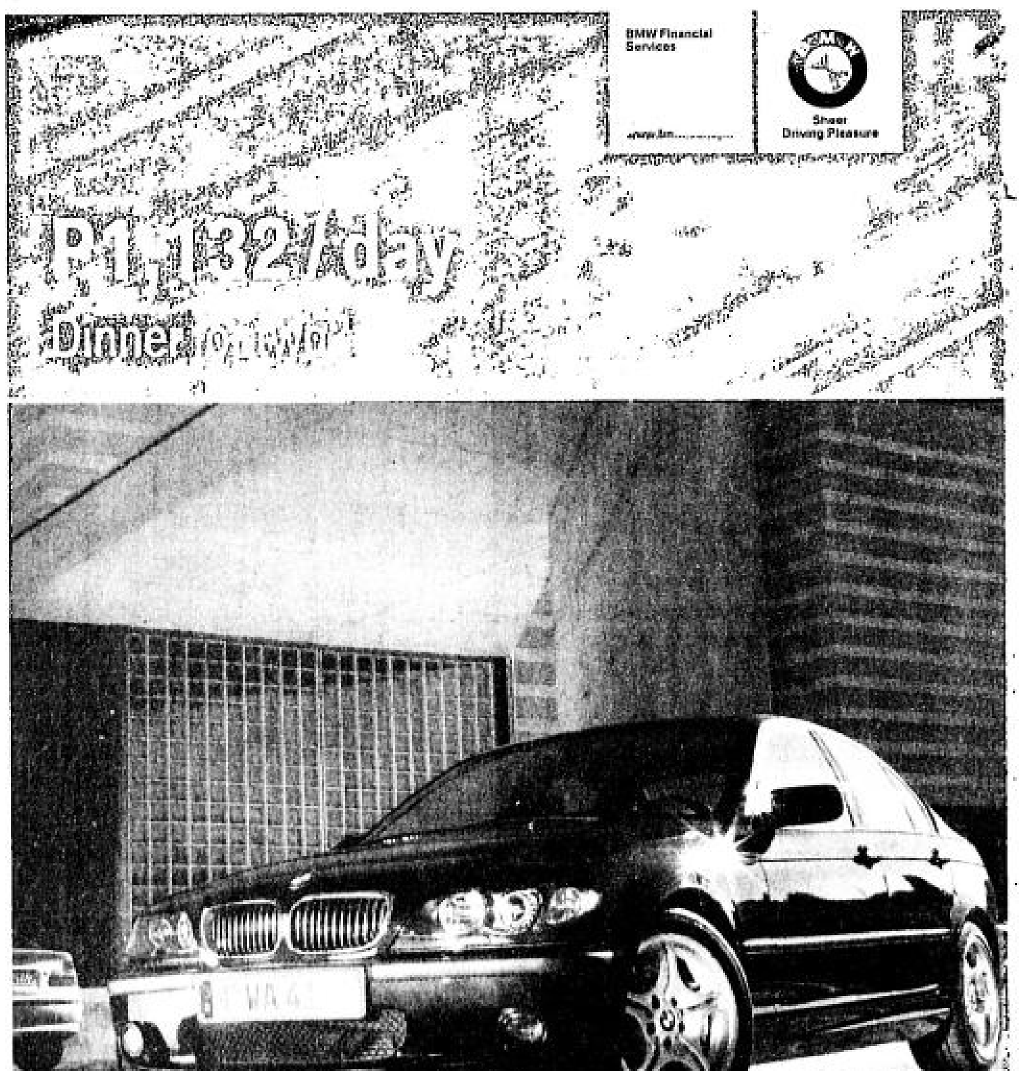
DUE to overwhelming requests the past few days, the International Basketball Academy (IBA) yesterday announced that it has extended the registration for the 'e-basketball' classes of former Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) champion coach Eric Altamirano set later this month.

Due to limited slots, applicants are advised to reserve early by calling 631-1195 or 0918-9259313 or e-mail at iba_phil@yahoo.com.

The opening days for several classes were reset to Jan. 21 (Friday class), Jan. 22 (Saturday class) and Jan. 24 (Monday class) at the Club 650 in Libis, Reyes Gym in Mandaluyong and Adidas Sports Kamp in Bonifacio Global City, respectively.

Class schedules are the following: (Module 1) 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., Friday (Module 2) 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. and every Saturday (Module 1) 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Students will get one free basketball T-shirt, free use of basketball training aids, use of Plyosports equipment and other perks.



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Monkey now on Sergio's back with Phil's Masters win

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Sergio Garcia has won only five times on the PGA Tour, and he won't celebrate his 25th birthday until Sunday. But with no other legitimate candidates to inherit Phil Mickelson's label, the Spaniard might have to settle for being the best player without a major.

And that's OK with him.

"I find it a bit funny ... because they're putting me on the list already," Garcia said. "If you just got on tour—and some people just got on tour who are 24 or 25—you can't just put them on that. But it's also a good thing, because they consider you a good golfer."

Garcia's five victories came in good tournaments—twice at the Buick Classic, Colonial, the Byron Nelson Championship and the winners-only Mercedes Championships.

And unlike other players, he has contended in majors.

Garcia first broke onto the scene as a 19-year-old at the PGA Championship, when he gouged that shot out of the tree on the 16th hole at Medinah and finished one shot behind Tiger Woods. He was paired with Woods in the final round of the 2002 US Open at Bethpage Black and finished fourth, and he closed with a 66 to tie for fourth at the Masters last year, although he never had a chance to win.

Garcia has had top 10s in all four majors.

"I'm working hard to try to get my majors soon," he said. "But it's something you can't rush. You have to keep giving yourself chances. Some guys are a bit more fortunate. They get one chance and they get through. And some others take them a bit longer."

Lefty's book

Everyone can read all about Phil Mickelson's victory at Augusta National the week of the Masters. Warner Books has acquired a book he wrote with Donald T. Phillips that is scheduled to be published on April 4.

The book is called "One Magical Sunday: But Winning Isn't Everything."

As it goes through every hole in the final round, Mickelson reflects on his journey to a green jacket—how he got started, developed his analytical approach as an amateur, and how his marriage and children keep his professional game in harmony with his needs.

"This book shows that no matter how many majors he wins, he'll always be at the top of the leaderboard in family values," said Time Warner Book Group chairman Laurence Kirschbaum.

Until the Masters triumph, Mickelson carried the monkey on his back as the best player to never have won a major.

Finest Euro moment

David Howell of England has won the Shot of the Year Award on the European tour for his 6-iron into the 17th green during a best-ball match at the Ryder Cup.

Along with a trophy from The Royal Bank of Scotland, Howell received a check for about $3,500 that he donated to the Tsunami Disaster Fund Appeal.

Europe was 1 down in its Saturday morning match, with momentum on the American side. Howell's 6-iron from 203 yards stopped 5 feet from the hole and he made the putt to square the match. Europe went on to win on the 18th hole, and eventually routed the Americans at Oakland Hills to capture the cup for the seventh time in 10 tries.

Turns out the shot of the year wasn't all that great.

"In all honesty, it wasn't the purest strike of my life," Howell said.

"However, it went dead straight and released nicely to 5 feet. It was a great feeling to see the ball so close to the hole, and even better to make the putt."

Three old men and a baby

The Sony Open will feature three old men and a baby.

Along with 15-year-old Michelle Wie playing next week at Waialae Country Club, Tom Kite, Craig Stadler and Peter Jacobsen from the Champions Tour are in the field.

Kite, 55, decided to use a one-time exemption from the money list to play a final year on the PGA Tour.

Stadler is still exempt from his victory in the 2003 BC Open. He might not have played the Sony Open, except that his 24-year-old son, Kevin, is making his debut as a PGA Tour rookie.

Seven players from the Mercedes Championships will not be playing next week on Oahu—Stephen Ames, Joey Sindelar, John Daly, Stuart Appleby, Sergio Garcia, Mike Weir and Tiger Woods. *AP*

MERCEDES CHAMPIONSHIP

Singh retains hold of lead as big showdown looms

KAPALUA, Hawaii—Vijay Singh made 15 pars Saturday, not the kind of golf that would seem to keep him atop the leaderboard in the Mercedes Championship.

One swing made the difference.

With Jonathan Kaye and Ernie Els closing fast, Singh hit a 248-yard (226-meter) approach into 10 feet (3 meters) on the par-5 15th for an eagle that allowed him to shoot a 4-under 69 and keep the lead going into the final round of the season-opening tournament.

"It was a disappointing four-under, but I'll still take it," Singh said. "The putts would not go in today. I wasn't hitting the ball badly at all, but I'm still in the lead and looking forward to tomorrow."

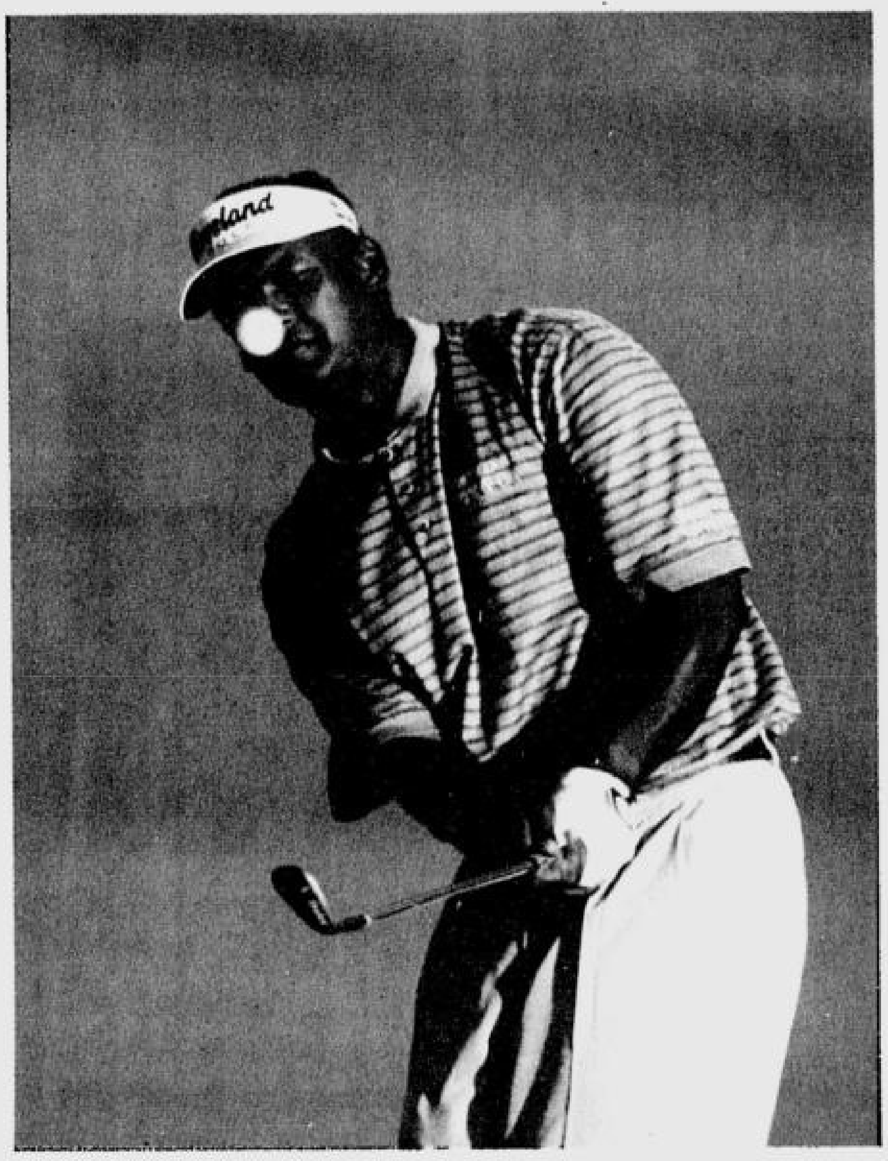
Singh, the only player in the winners-only field without a bogey on the Plantation Course, was at 19-under 200.

Kaye, who has played with the three top players in the world ranking the first three rounds, birdied six of his last eight holes for a 66 that left him one shot behind.

"I started hitting it closer, and I was below the hole and was able to be aggressive," Kaye said. "A lot of putts on the front nine were long putts that you just try to get close and not do anything stupid."

Bummer

Els took the lead from Singh with four birdies on his first five holes, but there's always one hole at Kapalua that grabs him, and this time it was the par-5 ninth. He hooked his approach into a bunker, took two shots to get out and made a bogey on a hole where most everyone else was making birdie.



ONE shot changed the day for Vijay Singh, who kept his place at the top. AFP

"I tried to run a 3-wood into the green and hit it left into a bunker about 40 yards short of the green," Els said. "I was up against the lip and left it in the bunker, and that's what slowed the whole thing down. It was a bit of a bummer."

He recovered with birdies on two of the last three holes for a 68 that left him two shots behind.

Hazard

Tiger Woods also threw three shots away late in his round—a 2-iron into the waist-high weeds on No. 15 that he never found, and a driver off the 17th hole that went 370 yards (337 meters), through the fairway, the rough and into the hazard.

He wound up with a 69 and was five shots behind.

Singh will be trying to win his 20th different PGA Tour event, and history is on his side. He has won the last 11 times when he has at least a share of the 54-hole lead, dating to the 2001 MCI Classic.

And everyone knows what to expect.

"He's playing exceptional, which is normal for him," said Stuart Appleby, who opened with a 74 and got into the hunt with rounds of 64-66, leaving him only four shots behind along with Mike Weir (71).

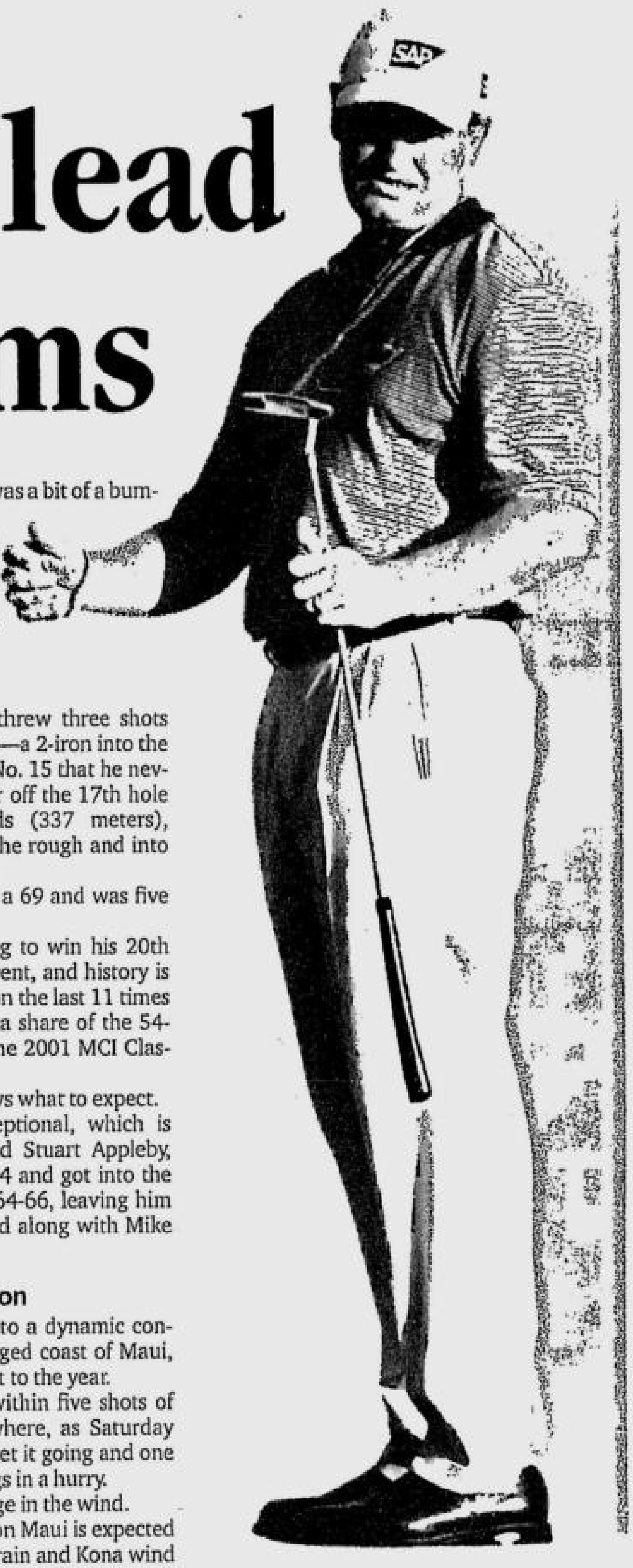
Dynamic conclusion

It was shaping up to a dynamic conclusion along the rugged coast of Maui, and an intriguing start to the year.

Six players were within five shots of Singh on a course where, as Saturday proved, anyone can get it going and one hole can change things in a hurry.

But there is a change in the wind.

A spectacular day on Maui is expected to give way to heavy rain and Kona wind from the opposite direction, making the Plantation play its toughest. *AP*



FOR a while, South African Ernie Els held the lead in the third round. AFP

Manchester United embarrassed by 0-0 draw

LONDON—Manchester United's millionaires were embarrassed Saturday, held to a 0-0 draw against Exeter in the third round of the FA Cup. Exeter is ranked 100 places below the Red Devils in the hierarchy of English soccer.

It was a bad day for the northern city of Manchester as fellow Premier League side Manchester City was ousted from the cup by Oldham 1-0.

"I'll take a replay," Manchester United manager said Alex Ferguson, whose team is the defending FA Cup champion. "I'm not happy to get a replay, but we're still in the cup. FA Cup football is about shocks."

All told, four Premier League sides were eliminated from soccer's oldest knockout competition—all beaten by lower division teams. Three other Premier League teams were held to draws—again by lower-ranked opposition—and face replays later this month.

Ten Premier League side gained victories.

In addition to Man City, Aston Villa fell, 3-1, at Sheffield United, Crystal Palace lost, 2-1, at Sunderland and Norwich went down, 1-0, at West Ham.

Joining Man United with draws were Blackburn and Fulham. Blackburn drew, 1-1, at Cardiff and Fulham played a 1-1 tie at Watford.

Man United manager Alex Ferguson rested some of his regulars. But in the second half he sent on three key first-team players—Paul Scholes, Alan Smith and Cristiano Ronaldo—but they failed to break down Exeter before stunned fans at United Old Trafford Stadium.

A screaming hoard of 9,000 Exeter supporters stood up for the last few minutes cheering their team.

A club that was near bankruptcy a few seasons ago, Exeter can count on another rich payday in the replay later his month at home. *AP*

Jets fashion thrilling 20-17 victory over Chargers

QUARTERBACK Chad Pennington of the New York Jets throws a pass downfield against the San Diego Chargers. AFP

SAN DIEGO—Chad Pennington's shoulder held up well enough to throw Marty Schottenheimer and the San Diego Chargers right out of the playoffs.

Pennington, bothered for the last five games by a strained rotator cuff, moved New York into range for Doug Brien's 28-yard field goal with 5 seconds left in overtime and the Jets shocked the Chargers, 20-17, in a wild-card game Saturday night.

The winning drive started on the Jets 30 after Chargers rookie Nate Kaeding was wide right on a 40-yard field goal try with 4:19 left in overtime. It included an 18-yard pass from Pennington to Moss that was upheld on review.

The Jets celebrated wildly while Schottenheimer walked across the field with a far-off look on his face.

And just like that, Schottenheimer still can't win in the playoffs. Named the Coach of the Year earlier in the day, he suffered his fifth straight playoff loss dating to 1993 with the Kansas City Chiefs and fell to 5-12 in his career, which also included a stop in Cleveland.

Schottenheimer's teams have gone one-and-out eight times.

Pennington threw two touchdowns for the Jets, who led 17-7 late in the third quarter and should have won in regulation.

But the Chargers forced overtime when All-Pro tight end Antonio Gates caught a 1-yard touchdown pass from Pro Bowler Drew Brees to tie it at 17 with 11 seconds left in regulation.

It came one play after Jets linebacker Eric Barton was whistled for a personal foul for hitting Brees on the helmet with his right forearm after Brees threw a desperation pass on fourth-and-goal that was batted down in the end zone. As Brien kicked the winning field goal, Barton sighed in relief.

Pennington, who's led the Jets to three straight wins in San Diego dating to 2002, was 23-of-33 for 279 yards. Brees was 31-of-42 for 319 yards. *AP*

Tszyu eyes IBF title vs Hatton

SYDNEY—Australia's Kostya Tszyu has signed a deal to fight Britain's Ricky Hatton for the International Boxing Federation super lightweight world title in Manchester in June, reports said here on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Russian-born Tszyu has committed to the first of a series of big title fights, Sydney's Sunday Telegraph said.

The newspaper said the deal was signed late Saturday and Tszyu will earn $5 million to fight Hatton in his home city at Manchester's MEN Stadium on June 4.

The early morning starting time is to accommodate a live broadcast into America for the rich Saturday night programming, the paper said.

Tszyu's promoter, Vlad Warton, will fly to England on Wednesday to finalize contracts with Hatton's promoter Frank Warren.

Tszyu had wanted to fight Arturo Gatti and Floyd Mayweather but they compete on rival US television networks. He faced being stripped of his IBF title if he failed to agree to terms to meet his mandatory challenger Hatton. *AFP*

MANGO TEE

Tommy, OV seek rare double again

FOLLOWING an unprecedented double victory last year, OV Espiritu and Tommy Manotoc are pairing up anew to defend their titles as low gross and low net champions in the 21st edition of the Alabang Country Club's Mango Tee member-guest invitational on Feb. 2-6.

Espiritu and Manotoc will take on the challenge of a field made bigger by a decision of the 2004 Mango Tee organizing committee to expand the competitions to five days. From last year's 256, the touted duo will now be among the 320 pairs on the roster.

Espiritu-Manotoc winning the gross and net titles in last year's tourney is believed to be the first such effort not just for the Mango Tee but also for the rest of the member-guest events played in various exclusive courses.

Smart Communications and Pilipinas Shell are co-presenting the Mango Tee. Taylor Made adidas/Golf Depot and Sharp Philippines are major sponsors, Nescafe, Nestea, Pepsi Cola and Security Bank/Diners Club are premium sponsors and Chinatrust, Standard Chartered and Turf Co. are area sponsors.

The Mango Tee committee is headed by Jun Galindez as chair. With him are Ed Lacson, Rolly Camu, Cid Diomampo, Bonnie Pimentel and Leo Villanueva. Providing support are directors Paul Cortez and Johnny Castillo, club GM Larry Valbuena, Caloy Coscolluela, Marites Bo-ot and Neneng Palmares.

Mitsubishi Motors and Citimotors are offering a car to players who score a hole-in-one on all the four par-3 holes every day. Flightmates of an acemaker and their respective caddies also stand to receive a special prize.

Hole sponsors are ACRO Industrial, Andi Tabusalla, Ayala Greenfield Estate, Beacon Environmental Management, City Service, GG&A Clubshares, Golfers Clubshares Inc., Green Cross, Joseph Rice Center/Jan Barandiaran, MIS Maritime Corp., Prudential Life Corp., Prudential Life Group, Safe Seas Shipping, San Miguel Corp. T&C Construction, True Value and YKK.

Filway-Time Life chess tourney slated

BIG cash prizes are at stake in the 1st Filway-Time Life Open chess tournament which kicks off Feb. 12 on the second floor of the Starmall Shopping Complex in Mandaluyong City. The tournament, sponsored by Filway Marketing Inc. CEO-president Hector O. Tagaysay, also the main benefactor of the country's top player, International Master Mark Paragua, dangles P15,000 for the winner of the Open section. The second placer pockets P10,000, the third placer P7,000, fourth P5,000, fifth P3,000, sixth P2,000, and seventh to 10th P1,000 each. Winners in the non-master, senior, junior and unrated categories get P1,000 each. The women's champion will receive P5,000, the second placer P3,000, the third placer P2,000, and the fourth and fifth placers P1,000 each. Prize purses of P4,000, P2,000, P1,000, P700 and P500 await the top five finishers in the boys' and girls' brackets of the kiddies (12-and-under) tournament. For inquiries, call tournament director Willie Abalos at (0918) 652-3265.

Marlon Bernardino

Medalla fires ace, leads Jungolf champs

TABUENA: By four

FELICIA Medalla scored a hole-in-one on the way to winning the girls' 7-8 years division in the Alabang Country Club year-end tournament for the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines recently.

Medalla aced the tough par-3 No. 8 with a US Kids 3-wood and a MaxFli 3D-Tec to highlight a score of 90 that earned for her the division title by seven strokes over Dana Gonzales.

International titleholders Miguel Tabuena, AR Ramos and Dottie Ardina also continued their winning ways with easy victories in their respective age-groups.

Tabuena racked up his third straight win in the Jungolf holiday series with a 78, four better than Bino dela Paz (82); Ramos (75) won over Justin Quiban (95) in boys' Class E and Ardina (78) was unchallenged in girls' Class C.

The other winners in the girls' division were Bambee dela Paz in Class A, Debbie de Villa in Class B, Christina Potenciano in Class D and Chloe Reyes with a 76 in Class F.

Also emerging as boys' champions were Gino Bunyi in Class A, Jik Abdon in Class B, Nicklaus Ekegren in Class C.

Jungolf president Luigi Tabuena thanked the board of directors of the Alabang Country Club for their continued support to junior golf development.

BIKE FOR HOPE
Senator Pia Cayetano (right) fields queries from reporters during a briefing on Bike for Hope at the Marina restaurant on Roxas Boulevard, Manila, yesterday. Bike for Hope is a charity cycling trek from Pangasinan to Baguio City, slated Jan. 15, meant to raise funds for Cayetano's foundation which benefits cancer patients. At left is Karen Villanueva of Pfizer, one of the event's major backers.
JESS YUSON

Ratcliffe, Lawrence rule Chairman's Cup

BAGUIO CITY—Briton Frank Ratcliffe and American Bill Lawrence overcame biting cold to take top honors last week in the fifth Chairman's Cup at the Camp John Hay Golf Club here.

The 64-year-old Ratcliffe, a regular in this event, toured the par-69 Jack Nicklaus-designed course for 48 points to win the overall net crown.

Lawrence, fresh off his stint at the Fil-Am Golf Invitational last month, made 44 points to top Group I in the one-day tourney held in honor of club chair Robert John Sobrepeña.

"We would like to thank all our members and sponsors who have supported the club's activities the past year," said Sobrepeña who celebrated his 50th birthday during the tournament.

Smart Communications, Wilson, CJH Golf Club, and CJH Leisure Inc. are the major sponsors. Le chef, Kork Inc., Federal Management, Careful Hands Laundry, Aressi's Bar and Restaurant, Hotshots, Figaro and Golfore are the other sponsors.

Tony Espiritu scored 45 points to top Group II. Mel Rabanes (44) took runner-up honors over Richard Solang via a countback.

Fabian Tolete (44) also beat Roland Casalan (44) on a lower handicap to win Group III.

Other winners were Dina Eden (ladies division) and Hanson So Sr. (guests division).

Grand Opening derby unfolds at LPC

PROMINENT cockers and breeders resume their rivalry when the Gentleman Cockers Association of the Philippines (GCAP) Grand Opening 7-Cock Derby unfolds at 6 p.m. today at the Las Piñas Coliseum. Fifty-five fights are on tap with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. GCAP founder Patrick Antonio said cockfighting enthusiasts will be treated to slambang fights entries like PEBR Makisig of 2004 Cavite International Derby champions Boy Royo and Pol Estrellado, Sundance of Rep. Ronnie Puno, Binangonan Balbina of Gov. Ito Yñares and former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Mulawin A of Rudy Albano and Winning Time Jobo of Rudy Salud and Lito Orillaza. For inquiries, call 873-1040 and 874-3910.

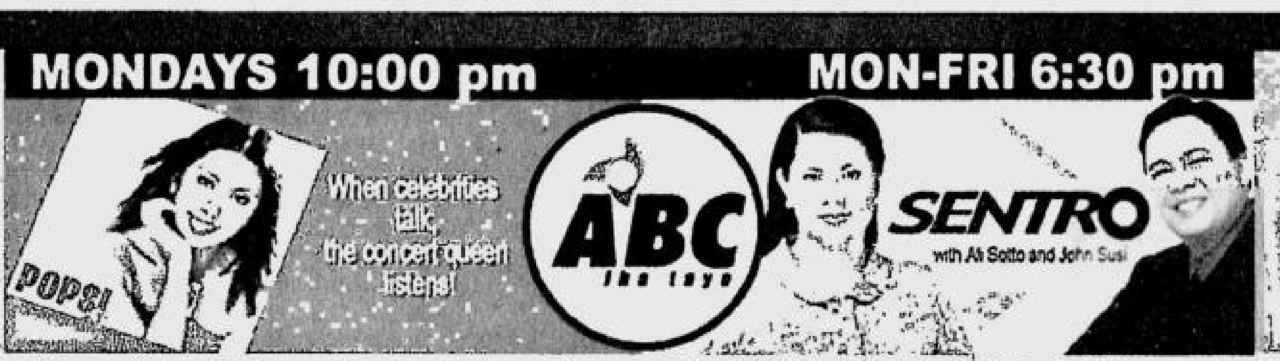
NCA 7-cocker tomorrow at Big Dome

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association (NCA), the country's biggest group of cockers, will stage a 7-cock derby tomorrow and Thursday at its home turf at the Araneta Coliseum. Hosting the event are Raymond Velayo and Rep. Ompong Plaza of Agusan del Sur. Velayo and Plaza are themselves fielding entries—Arnis Master and RGP Agusan, respectively—in the major derby. Submission of weights will be held from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. today at the Araneta green gate. With more than 60 fights scheduled in tomorrow's elimination round, the first fight will start at 5 p.m. Meanwhile, foreign participants have started arriving for the prestigious World Slasher Cup 8-Cock Derby set Jan. 18, 20 and 22. Legendary breeder Dan Gray of Alabama and Joe Wolcott, last year's Sunset Game Club Cocker of the Year, banner the latest batch of arrivals.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Monday, January 10, 2005


MONDAYS 10:00 pm
POPS!
When celebrities talk, the concert queen listens!
ABC
MON-FRI 6:30 pm
SENTRO
with Ali Sotto and John Susi
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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers In Paris	Hiram	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	OK Fine! Whatever			Insider	The Correspondents
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Solar		Wow		Slamball		Restol	Zeta Project	Mucha Lucha!	Spiderman	Deep Space Nine		Greatest KO Part 1 & 2							
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Nick Mix		100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd				Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	OPM MYX Countdown		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		The O.C.		Saturday Night Live		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	JKX	Meet My Folks		Queer Eye For A Straight Guy		Dateline		Nip/ Tuck	
Cinema One		Anak Ng Dilim				Kung Tapos Na Ang Kailanman				Halik Ng Sirena				Kapag Puso'y Sinugatan				Mano Po	
Studio 23	Bewitched	Survivor Thailand						Batman Animated Series	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Video	Jake 2.0		Charmed		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Travel Time
AXN		24		24		The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	7 Days		Fear Factor		The Shield		24		24	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	That 70s Show	Everybody Loves Raymond	Grounded For Life	Becker	Breaking The Magician's Code/ The Casino		Friends	That 70s Show
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Killer Instinct	Totally Wild	Be The Creature		Planet Wild	Wildlife Detectives	The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles With Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat'l Geographic Specials: Built For The Kill: Bird Of Prey		Killer Instinct/Last Maneater: The Killer Tigers Of India/Totally Wild		Be The Creature	
Solar Sports		In This Corner		FIVB World Grand Prix Germany vs. Rostock					GWS ep.54	Sagupaan		NBA Jam Local	NBA TV Daily	NBA Indiana vs. Phoenix					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	E! True Hollywood Story		Behind The Velvet Ropes	Area		Breathing Room	Genuine Article	Brini Maxwell Show	Modern Girl's Guide
HBO									The Matrix Reloaded (6:45 PM)					Sinbad: Legend Of The Seven Seas			Six Feet Under 27: Perfect Circles		Casualties Of War (11:20PM)
Star Movies			Deadly Betrayal			Reality Bites (5:10 PM)				Year Of The Dragon				Reign Of Fire			The 25th Hour (10:45PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Teen Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Codename: Kids Next Door	Mr. T	Josie And The Pussycats	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				NFL Playoffs Nfc Wildcard						FA Cup Highlights		Sportscenter Taiwan	Soccer FIFA Fever	Sportscenter Taiwan	Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball				Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie McGuire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Untalkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			The Wilde Girls (3:45 PM)				Blurred			Accidental Hero				Dragon Fighter			High School High		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Fabio Montale				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Agency II		Child Of Our Time		David Copperfield			Just Cause (10:35PM)		Agency II (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Mythbusters		Monster Garage		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Unsolved History				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Civilisations	
MTV Philippines		MTV Lokal		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits		MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV U-Break	Mojo:	MTV Brand New	MTV Fashionista	TRL		Cribs	Spring Break	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus							Mercedes C'ships Final Rd							NFC Wildcard Play-offs					
EWTN	St. Matthew	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Benediction And Devotion	Story Keepers	Image Of God	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Light Of The East II	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	Threshold Of Hope Encore		Sunday Night Live With Fr. Groeschel		Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	G.K. Chesterton	Catholic Compass	

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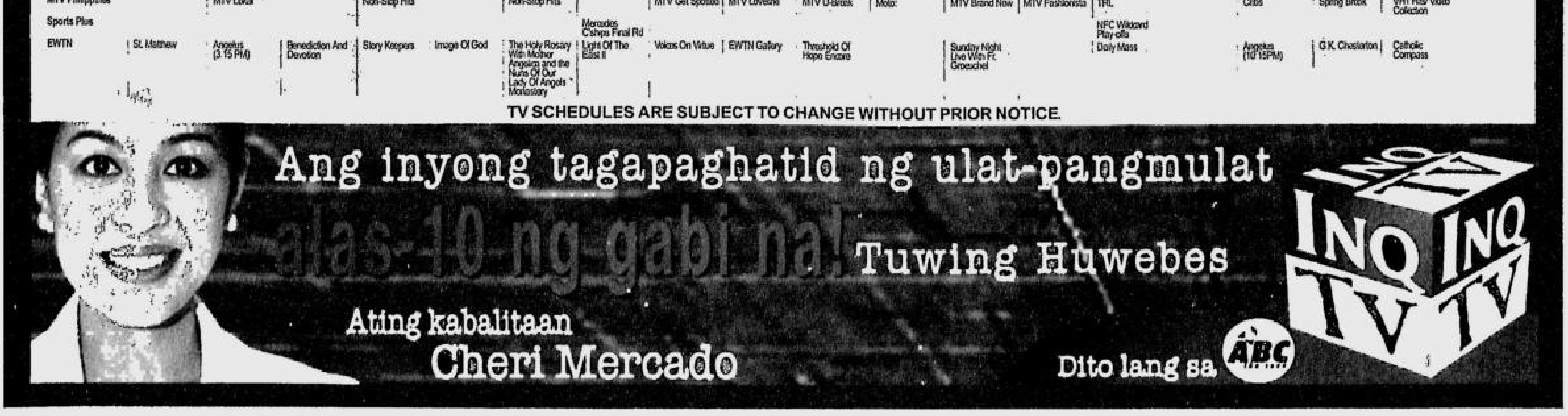
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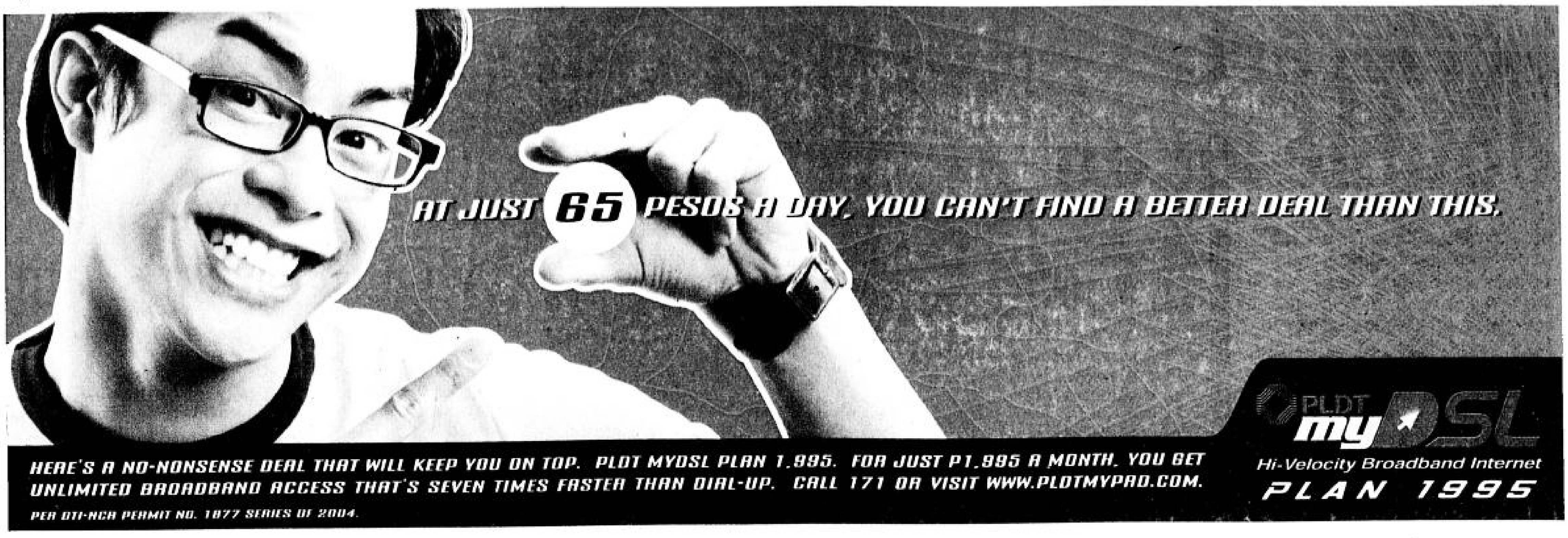
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Dynamism in the static

How illustrious Spanish actor Javier Bardem portrayed a quadriplegic, with exemplary results

NEW YORK—To portray a real-life quadriplegic in "The Sea Inside," Javier Bardem decided to focus on "the voice and the eyes."

"I tried to calm myself and forget the anxiety you get due to the fact you must be motionless, so I could bring up the energy to the right place," he told The Associated Press during a recent interview.

"I also wanted to achieve a feeling of dynamism inside the static. Due to how (the character) talks and behaves, there is something that moves while the body remains motionless, it is like a kind of balance between energies," he said.

"The Sea Inside" is based on the true story of Ramon Sampedro, a ship mechanic from Spain, which is also Bardem's homeland. Sampedro is paralyzed in a diving accident and fights for his right to die for the next 30 years.

Bardem and "The Sea Inside"—written, directed and produced by Alejandro Amenabar ("The Others," 2001)—are getting-Oscar buzz after being nominated for Golden Globe awards for best actor and best foreign movie. The cast also includes well-known actresses such as Lola Duenas—the nurse in Pedro Almodovar's "Talk to Her"—and TV celebrity Belen Rueda in her first big-screen role.

Early start

Bardem, who comes from a family of Spanish actors, appeared in his first movie at age 6. His breakout role came in 2000, when he received an Oscar nomination for his role as the persecuted Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas in "Before Night Falls."

Last year, he appeared with Tom Cruise and Jamie Foxx as drug lord Felix in the thriller "Collateral," and he's set to play Pablo Escobar in the upcoming "Killing Pablo."

During the interview, which was conducted in Spanish, a relaxed Bardem sat on a hotel sofa, informally dressed in a blue shirt and jeans. He did his best not to appear bored during an exhausting day of back-to-back interviews, maintaining eye contact and smiling throughout.

In order to make the 35-year-old Bardem look like the 55-year-old Sampedro, British makeup artist Jo Allen ("The Hours," "Gladiator") shaved him bald and held daily makeup sessions of up to five hours each.

"I spent three months in bed, because the shooting took 10 hours, and then I went to sleep in my own bed. You feel your body change, it gets a different gravity, a weight," Bardem said. "But I did not worry too much with all this because it helped me understand the character."

Before shooting began, Bardem read two books written by Sampedro and stayed for a month with four quadriplegics at a specialized hospital in Spain.

"None of them agreed with Ramon Sampedro's decision," he said. "All of them fought in the opposite direction, they wanted to live, but curiously they were very tolerant with Sampedro's wish. They are even more tolerant that the (Roman Catholic) Church, because they understand someone in that situation could wish to die."

Really into it

Amenabar said Bardem sank so deeply into his role, sometimes "it was really difficult to talk to Bardem right after we cut, because he still was more Sampedro" than himself.

Amenabar also said Bardem "had a very hard time physically and emotionally shooting the last sequence—the last one we shot—because he was saying goodbye to the character. It was very hard on him."

Although he is the only Spanish actor ever nominated for an Oscar, Bardem says winning an Academy Award "is not important for me. Not at all. It is more important that bombings stop in Iraq, that United States respect the Kyoto Accord, or that international observers be allowed to Guantanamo."

Does he expect American audiences to embrace "The Sea Inside" like those in Spain?

"Maybe with this new government, half the country would not want to see it. The half that voted for Bush," he said. "But honestly, I do not need them to go see it." *AP*

"I TRIED to calm myself and forget the anxiety co I could bring up the energy to the right place."

Film legends vie for US directors' guild award

LOS ANGELES— The Director's Guild of America pitted legendary filmmakers Martin Scorsese and Clint Eastwood against each other on Thursday when it unveiled its nominees for best director.

Scorsese was nominated for his epic three-hour biography of billionaire Howard Hughes, "Aviator," and Eastwood for his female boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby." Also nominated for the DGA's top directors award was Taylor Hackford for his Ray Charles film biography "Ray," and relative newcomers Alexander Payne for the road comedy "Sideways" and Marc Forster for his "Finding Neverland," a romantic film about the creation of "Peter Pan."

The winner of the DGA award will be named on Jan. 29.

DGA President Michael Apted said the honor is especially meaningful because it comes from the filmmakers' peers. He called them: "men and women who know the blood, passion and fear that go into each production."

Winning a DGA award is often an important indicator for the Oscars, the US film industry's top honors given in February by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Track record

Fifty of the 56 winners of the DGA award have gone on to win the Oscar for best director. And the Oscars has a long history of giving its top award, for best motion picture, to the film made by the person who won best director.

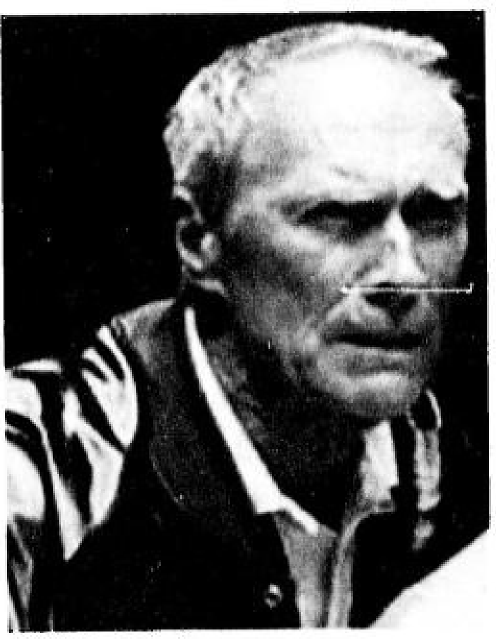
Of the six DGA winners who have missed the Oscar, three have come in the past 10 years, including 2003 when Rob Marshall won the DGA honor for "Chicago" but lost the best director Oscar to Roman Polanski for "The Pianist."

A DGA win would be especially gratifying for Scorsese, the iconic director of films like "Taxi Driver" and "Goodfellas." His work "Aviator" earned him his sixth DGA nomination, but he has never won the award or a best director Oscar. In 2003, the DGA gave him its Lifetime Achievement Award.

Eastwood, the veteran actor turned director, has been nominated for the DGA honor three times, and he won it in 1992 for the western "Unforgiven." That film also earned him an Oscar.

Taylor Hackford has been nominated for the DGA trophy once, for 1982's "An Officer and a Gentleman," but he did not win.

The DGA nomination is the first for Payne and Forster. *Reuters*



CLINT Eastwood

MARTIN Scorsese

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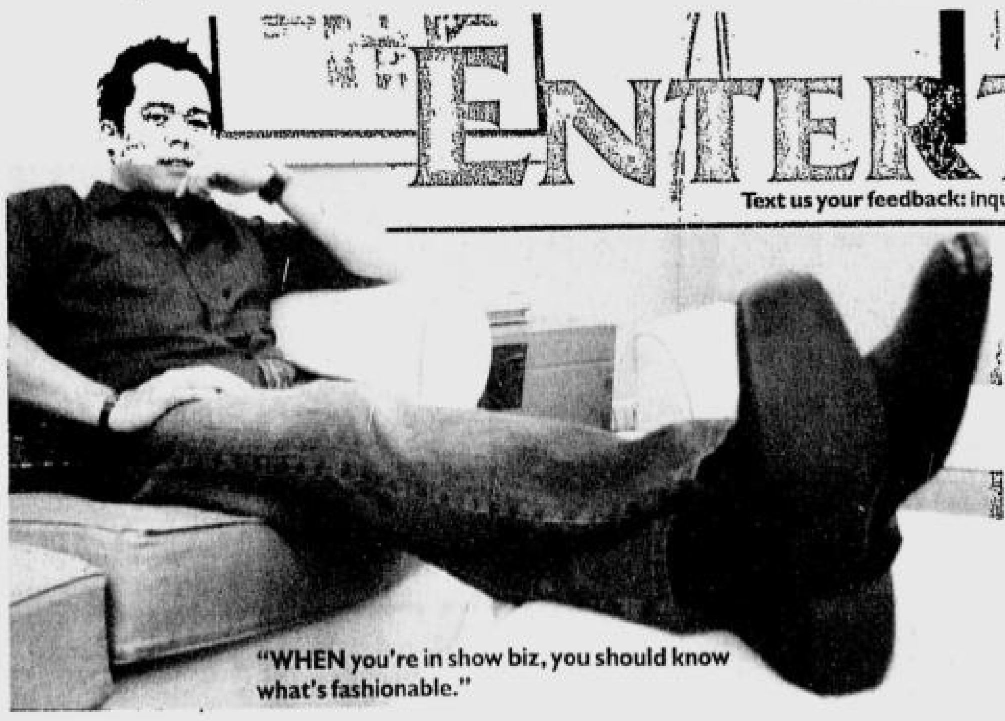
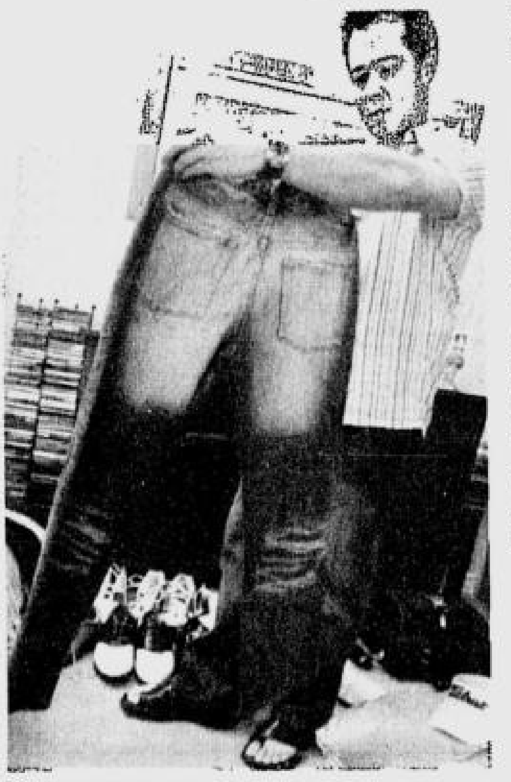


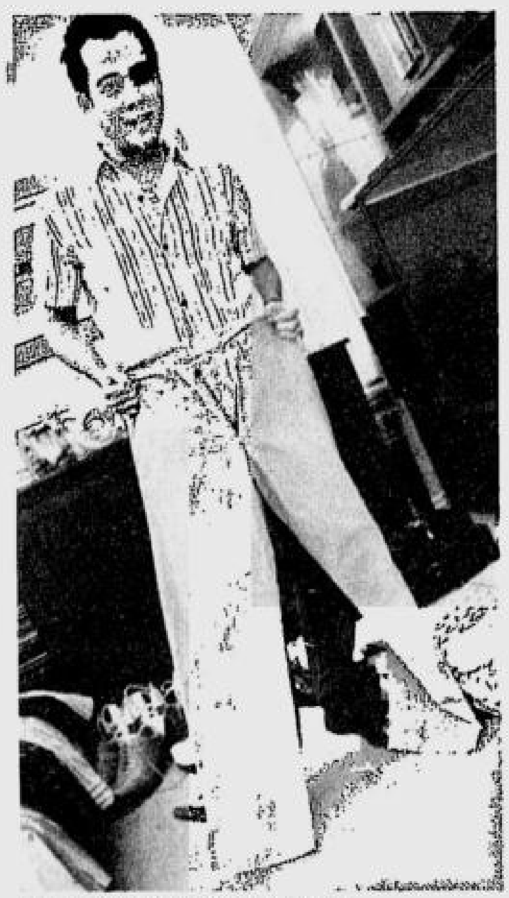
"WHEN you're in show biz, you should know what's fashionable."

Dingdong Avanzado: 4 wardrobe changes a year

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Romy Homillada



THE FAVORITE jeans from People are People



KHAKIS from American Eagle

BY JC Buendia, a striped shirt with "interesting" colors

SINGER DINGDONG Avanzado says his life took a new turn when he married singer-actress Jessa Zaragoza and then became father to Jayda, now one year old.

"My priorities have changed," Dingdong tells INQUIRER Entertainment in an interview at the Avanzado home in Quezon City. "Before, I had only myself to think about. Now, I have a wife and a daughter to take care of.

"All my life, I wanted to have my own family. I really prayed for this. Now that I have one, I'm determined to do what is right," says Dingdong. His own parents—former Siquijor mayor Fidelito Avanzado and Mayor Carina Veloso Flores of Oton, Iloilo—have long been separated.

OUT OF THE CLOSET

Dingdong, who ran for Quezon City vice mayor in the last election, says he and Jessa decided to "take a break from show business and concentrate on our family."

He explains: "Once you get caught up in show biz *kasi, tuloy-tuloy na.* Right now, I'm just enjoying watching my daughter grow. In fact, I find it hard to leave the house, especially *kapag ayaw niya akong paalisin.*"

Janelle Amanda Loyola Avanzado was delivered by cesarean section on June 1, 2003. "I think this child will eventually join show biz," says the proud father. "She's very intelligent. She already knows the alphabet, and she's not shy. And she is not even two years old yet."

Dingdong adds: "You'd laugh if you know how the word 'daddy' evolved from 'dad' to 'dada' to 'daddy'. Just recently, we found out that Jayda remembers the sounds of animals—cat, horse, dog, cow, even lizard. My prayer now is that we, as parents, will be able to teach her to be good and God-fearing."

Nonetheless, the singer says, he makes sure he has time for himself. "I play basketball and golf. I go to the gym. Golf is where I meet a lot of friends. When I'm home, the X-Box is my ultimate stress-buster. Jessa and I go out with friends, too. But I hardly go to the mall."

He says he leaves the shopping to his wife. "When I go to the mall, it's always to look for furniture and things for the house."

TOPS. "My wife recently bought me a new wardrobe. I change my wardrobe every quarter, *para* updated sa style. Most of these are polo shirts made from stretchable fabric.

"I like the striped polo that designer JC Buendia made for me. The colors are very interesting—a combination of pink, yellow and blue. But if I were to shop for clothes, I'd go for solid colors. I dress simply.

"If you're an *artista*, it's very important that you're aware of what's in fashion. With suits, *matagal ang buhay n'yan*. I bought this gray suit in Japan in 2001. I also have a black suit that I bought in Australia in 1997. They still fit me.

"I like the gray suit from Japan because it's very functional. I can wear it in the morning or at night. It was tailor-made for me.

"JC Buendia made my newest suit. It's very fashionable. It was inspired by the stuff worn by the stars of 'Queer Eye for the Straight Guy.' The suit is longer than the usual. JC said he could just cut it when I get tired of the design. I wore this when I performed at Ryan Cayabyab's recent birthday concert."

PANTS. "I have a lot, and these two are my favorites. The first pair is something I bought at People Are People more than a year ago. I like how the fabric faded. The other pair caught my attention because the style is very unique. When you're in show biz, you aim to be different.

"I don't like flared jeans. They makes me look short. I also don't like the baggy types. Those *really* make me feel short. Loose and straight-cut types suit me best.

"I wear khaki jeans when I play golf. My fa-

DINGDONG/ A2-3

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3 KUNG FU HUSTLE	3 BLADE: TRINITY	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 OCEAN'S 12 [illegible] 5:30, 8:00, 10:30	7 HAPPY TOGETHER	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 MANO PO 3 2:00, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30, 10:30	3 ONE MISSED CALL
4 OCEAN'S 12	4 ENTENG KABISOTE	4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 OCEAN'S 12 1:00, 3:35, 6:10, 8:45, 11:20	4 HAPPY TOGETHER
5 HAPPY TOGETHER				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 KUNG FU HUSTLE 1:05, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:25, 11:30	5

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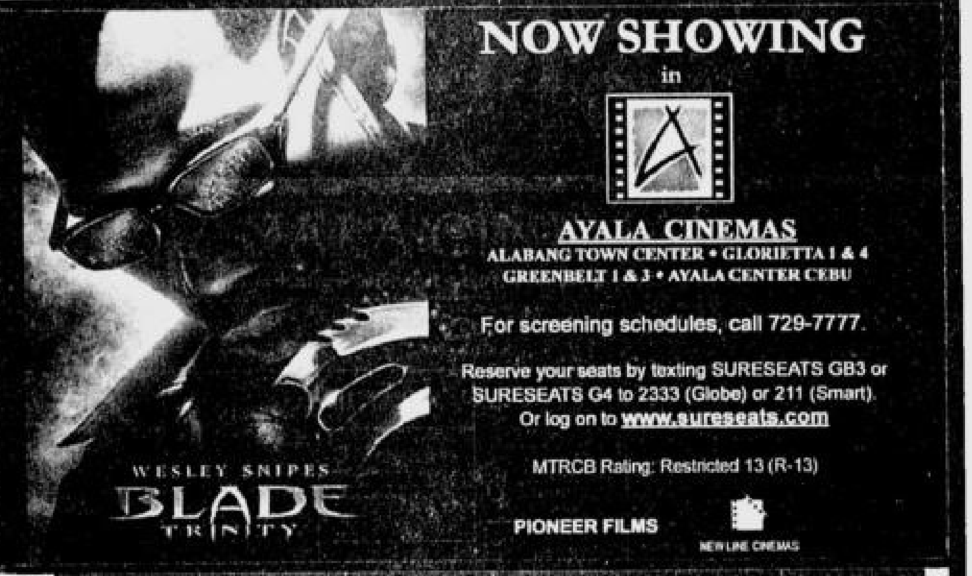
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Blade faces off with Dracula at last

WESLEY SNIPES returns as the day-walking vampire hunter in the explosive "Blade: Trinity."

When the Vampire Nation hatches a plan to frame Blade in a series of brutal killings, he must join forces with the Nightstalkers, a clan of human vampire hunters, in an extreme battle in which the trail of blood leads directly to the notorious vampire legend, Dracula.

Written and directed by David S. Goyer, "Blade: Trinity" also stars Jessica Biel as Abigail, daughter of Whistler (Kris Kristofferson), who inherits the vampire-slaying duties that once belonged to Blade (Wesley Snipes); and Ryan Reynolds ("National Lampoon's" Van Wilder) as Hannibal King, one of the Nightstalkers.

Keep 'em coming

Following the initial 1998 hit, "Blade," the 2002 sequel "Blade 2" went on to achieve even greater box office success. "Blade: Trinity" brings back the Daywalker Blade to face the greatest challenge of his vampire-fighting career.

Goyer, who has written the screenplays for all three films in the "Blade" franchise and also takes on the role of director for "Blade: Trinity," offers his take on the continuing success of the series, and why audiences keep coming back for more.

For the latest chapter, Goyer has created two interweaving story lines, both of them presenting serious obstacles for Blade to overcome.

"The first is that the vampires have decided to out Blade and they've effectively framed him so that the FBI and the local police are also hunting him, actually doing the vampires' work for them," says Goyer. "When the FBI eventually capture Blade, he's forced to accept the help of Hannibal King and Abigail Whistler, who are members of another vampire hunting organization called the Nightstalkers. And they become Blade's new allies for the third film."

Producer Peter Frankfurt elaborates: "The Nightstalkers are a guerilla band of humans who know what is going on. Hannibal King was someone who had been attacked and converted to vampirism and was then able to cure himself. Because he crossed back from being a vampire, he has a real dedication to stamping them out. Abigail's never been a vampire, but she had to cope with what happened to her father and the rest of her family."

From fan to cast

Wesley Snipes describes the evolution of his character: "Blade finds himself face to face with his destiny as he encounters the vampire of all vampires. It is his most difficult challenge yet."

Jessica Biel, who joins the series as Whistler's daughter Abigail, one of the chief members of the Nightstalkers, was attracted to the project because she was a big fan of the original "Blade" and found the new developments in the storyline intriguing. "It's great that Blade has joined forces with other people who are on his team, who are helping and who are of almost the same caliber as she is," says Biel. "And I liked it that we were dealing with the Dracula. It wasn't just another vampire."

"Blade: Trinity" offers an awesome new array of vampire-fighting weapons. As the leader of the Nightstalkers, Abigail has a supply of unusual weapons, which complement her martial arts prowess. They include a series of knives which flip out from the wrist and the tip of her boot.

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2 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 SIGAW
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 SIGAW
2 OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 BLADE TRINITY
6 KUNG FU HUSTLE

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 MANO PO 3
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 AISHITE IMASU
6 ONE MISSED CALL

ILOILO (033) 338-8070
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ONE MISSED CALL
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE
5 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

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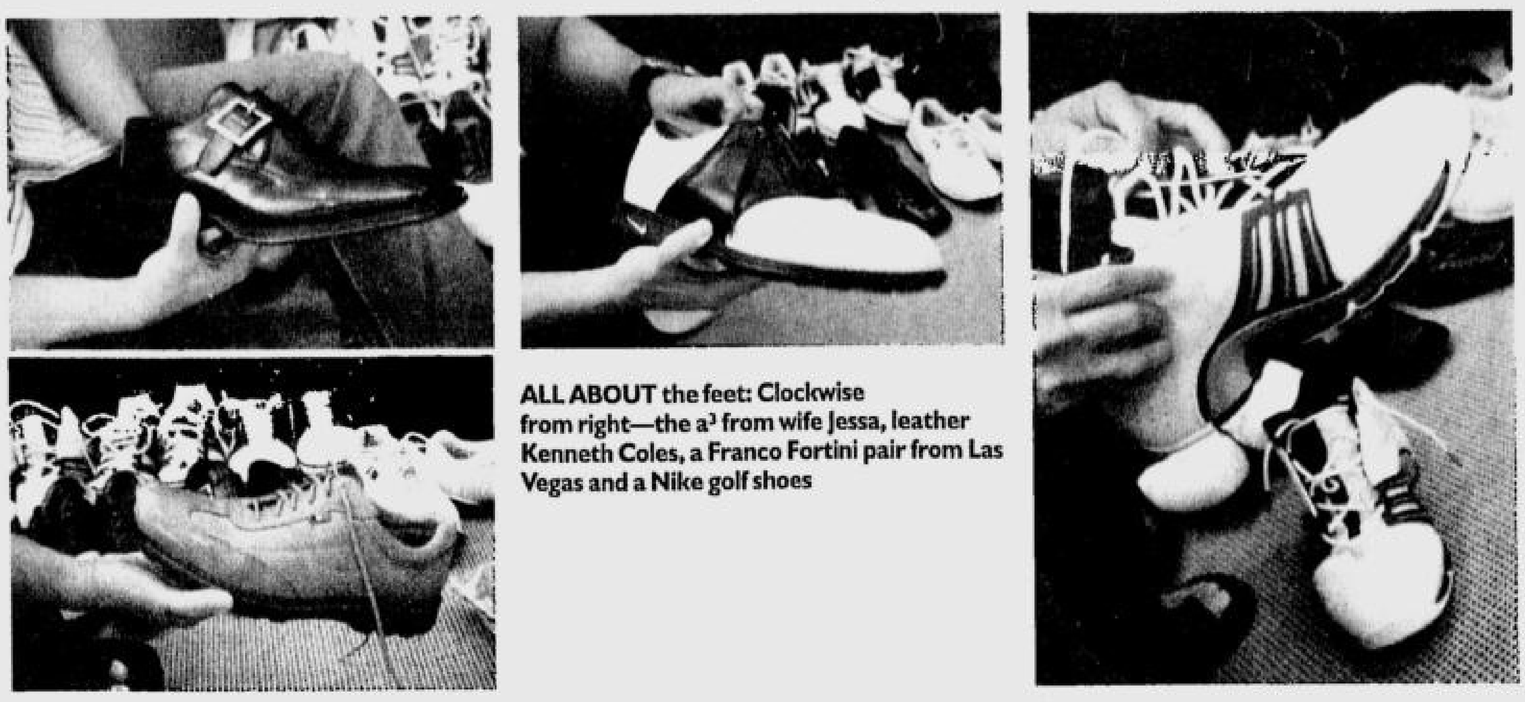
MOVIE PASS
MOVIE PASS
MOVIE PASS

GOLF gear is serious business.



ALL ABOUT the feet: Clockwise from right—the a³ from wife Jessa, leather Kenneth Coles, a Franco Fortini pair from Las Vegas and a Nike golf shoes

Dingdong Avanzado: 4 wardrobe changes a year

A CONNOISSEUR of shades

From page A2-1

vorite pair, which I bought in the States, is from American Eagle. I bought it because of the fabric and the cut.

SHOES. "I bought my Franco Fortini pair because of the color. It's brown and it looks good with khakis. I got this in Las Vegas when I had a show there. It also looks nice with blue jeans.

"This black leather pair from Kenneth Cole has an interesting story. I bought this at a Kenneth Cole outlet in New Jersey for only $27. I couldn't believe how cheap it was, so I went to the counter and asked the sales clerk: 'Are these really for $27?" She said: 'Actually, they're not. But they were placed there by accident and we have to honor that.' Later, I found out that it actually cost $161.

"I give away rubber shoes; I'm generous that way. But I would never part with this LeBron Nike pair because my best friend Ian gave it to me. Ian is the husband of comedian Marissa Sanchez. He lent it to me once when we played basketball. *Ang sarap sa paa*. Ian is so generous. He decided to give it to me *na lang*. What's nice is that this also looks good with jeans.

"My newest pair is the a3 from Adidas. This is a gift from Jessa. Adidas shoes have good cushioning. I found out from my physical therapist that it is ideal for flat-footed people. I'm semi-flatfooted."

"My Nike golf shoes are a birthday gift from friends in Guam. I got this last July 2001. They [friends] matched the shoes to the golf set I bought from Nike. Guam was where I held my golf tournament in 2002. My mom has many *kababayans* in Guam. There's an Oton Association in there."

BAGS. "My Tumi is one of my favorite bags. This is also a gift from Guam. I didn't know how expensive it was until a friend here told me that a backpack like this could cost up to $350. I use this to carry my accessories when I have shows. I like its style and because it's waterproof."

SPORTSWEAR. "I love basketball. I like this La Salle jersey for the obvious reason that I came from that school. I'm proud to say that this year, I was the one who sang the national anthem on the opening day of the UAAP. We won that conference. They wanted to give me a La Salle shirt and a pair of shorts, but I asked for a jersey.

"I used to play for La Salle in grade school and high school. *Kaya lang hindi na ako lumaki*, so I became a singer (laughs).

"My running gear is from the States. I bought it when Jessa and I went there last February. I saw other stuff that I liked, but I don't think I could use them here in the Philippines.

"Ashworth makes a lot of good golf apparel for men. I have several, but this blue one is my favorite because of the color. It looks good with my favorite golf visor."

ACCESSORIES. "I like my pair of Nike eyewear because it fits my face really well. It

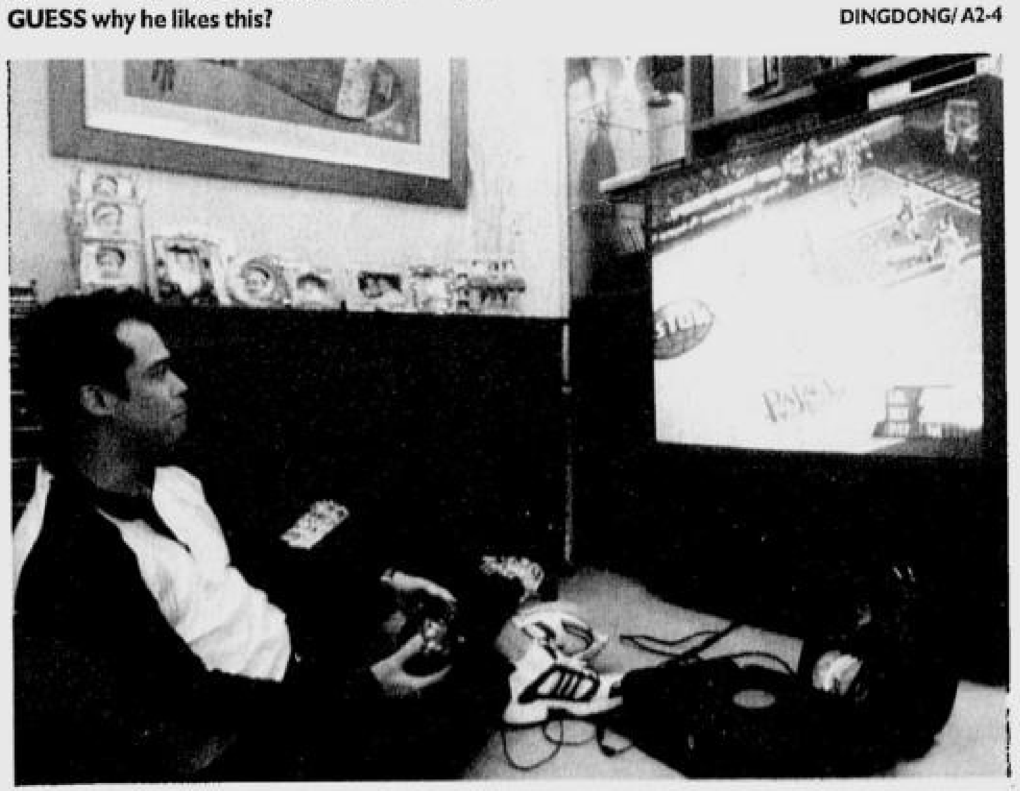
DINGDONG/ A2-4

DINGDONG'S beloved Tumi backpack

THIS BELT looks "good on stage."

KENNETH Cole wristwatch

GUESS why he likes this?



BASKETBALL fan. He used to play, too.

Exclusive
SCREENING
Robinsons Movieworld
METRO EAST

From **Jean-Jacques Annaud**, the highly acclaimed director of The Bear, comes a heartwarming story about the power of friendship and the bond between brothers.

SYNOPSIS:
Two mischievous twin tiger cubs live a carefree life in an exotic jungle amidst beautiful ancient ruins. But one day, an act of fate forces them apart, as one is sold off to the circus and the other becomes the pampered pet of a governor's son. Witness their remarkable journey as these tigers grow up, reunite and embark on an incredible adventure to find their way home.

CAST:
Guy Pearce, Jean-Claude Dreyfus, Oanh Nguyen, Philippine Leroy-Beaulieu, Moussa Maaskri, Vincent Scarito

MTRCB Rating: G

Solar Entertainment Corporation

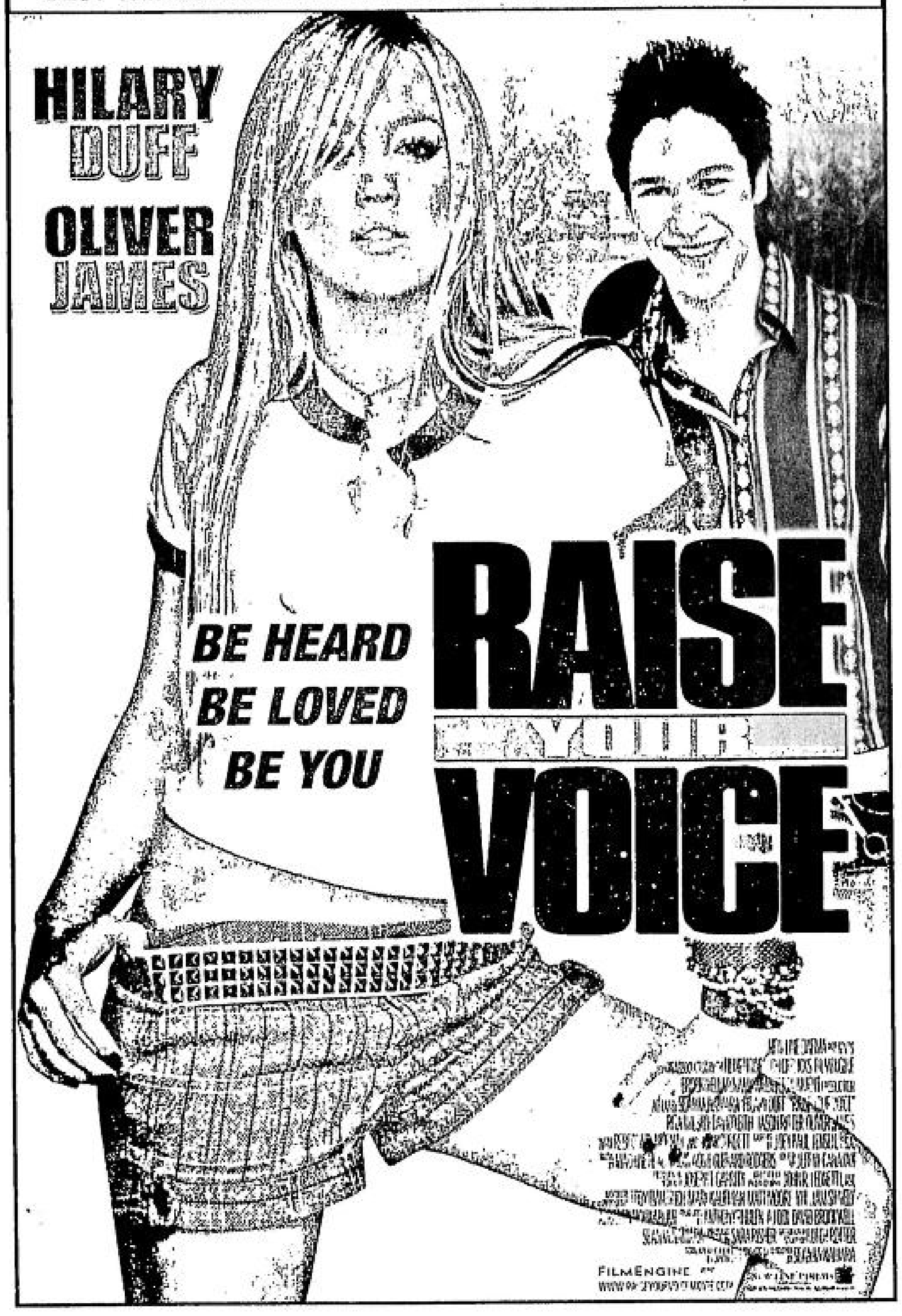
A NEW FAMILY ADVENTURE FILM
From the award-winning director of "The Bear"
TWO BROTHERS
BROTHERHOOD KNOWS NO BOUNDS

Bitin?
Non-Stop Ang
Kwentuhan...
Usapan...
Daldalan...
Tsikahan...
Dinig Mo Pa Ang
Kanyang
Buntong-Hininga.

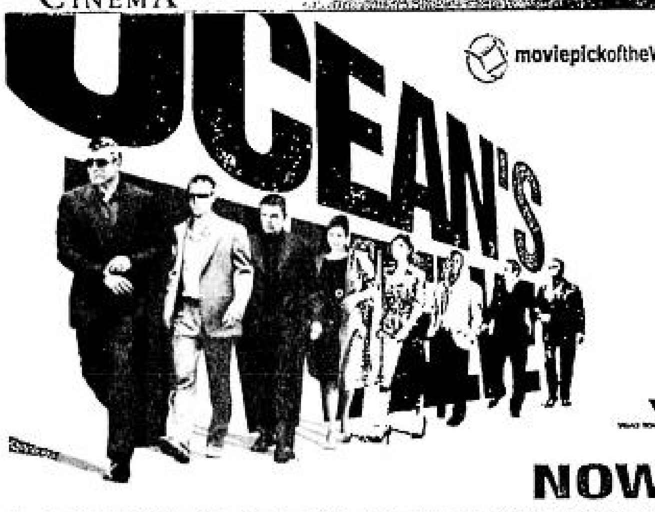
IBA PA RIN ANG MAY LANDLINE!
PLDT

MTRCB RATING ▶G GENERAL AUDIENCE ALL AGES ADMITTED **OPENS JAN. 13**

OVERCOMING YOUR OBSTACLES, ACHIEVING YOUR DREAMS AND FALLING IN LOVE WITH THE BEST LOOKING HUNK IN SCHOOL ARE THE BEST THINGS THAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU THIS NEW YEAR, 2005 !



SM CINEMA movietime



moviepickoftheWeek

GEORGE CLOONEY
BRAD PITT
MATT DAMON
CATHERINE ZETA-JONES
ANDY GARCIA
DON CHEADLE
BERNIE MAC
JULIA ROBERTS

TWELVE IS THE NEW ELEVEN.
OCEAN'S TWELVE

NOW SHOWING

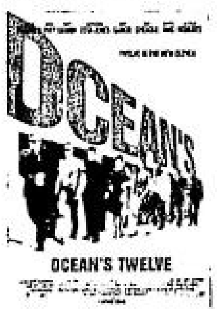
NOW SHOWING

BLADE TRINITY

BLADE TRINITY
MTRCB RATING: R13
Now Showing at:
SM Pampanga • Bacoor
Cebu • Iloilo • Davao
Cagayan de Oro

STEPHEN CHOW
功夫
KUNG FU HUSTLE

KUNG FU HUSTLE
MTRCB RATING: PG13
Now Showing at:
SM Pampanga • Marilao
Bacoor • Dasmariñas



OCEAN'S TWELVE
MTRCB RATING. PG13
Now Showing at:
SM Pampanga • Baguio
Bacoor • Batangas • Dasmariñas
Cebu • Iloilo • Davao
Cagayan de Oro

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5 MANO PO 3
6 ENTENG KABISOTE

sm city marilao
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city baguio
1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE

sm city bacoor
1 SIGAW
2 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE
5 BLADE TRINITY
6 ENTENG KABISOTE
7 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
8 MANO PO 3

sm city batangas
1 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

sm city dasmariñas
1 KUNG FU HUSTLE
2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 ENTENG KABISOTE

sm city lucena
1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 MANO PO 3
3 ONE MISSED CALL
4 ENTENG KABISOTE

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
6 ONE MISSED CALL
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
8 BLADE TRINITY

sm city iloilo
1 ONE MISSED CALL
2 RESERVED
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 OCEAN'S TWELVE
6 BLADE TRINITY
7 RESERVED
8 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city davao
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ONE MISSED CALL
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE

sm city cagayan de oro
1 BLADE TRINITY
2 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
3 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
4 FORGOTTEN

OPENS JANUARY 19

MTRCB RATING ▶PG-13 | CHILDREN BELOW 13 YRS. OLD WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED IF ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR ADULT.

Robert DeNiro Ben Stiller Dustin Hoffman Barbra Streisand Blythe Danner Teri Polo

WE'VE MET THE PARENTS, NOW LET'S...

Meet the Fockers

Misery loves family.

Solar Entertainment Corporation

OPENS JANUARY 13, 2005 MTRCB R-13

Not since " Notting Hill " has there been a Romantic Comedy this sweet, sexy and funny!

KATRIN WEISSER TIM WILLIAMS SANDRA LEONHARD

then call me.
Seeking impotent man
Fairly attractive woman in
...nties is seeking
...t with, for adv
...hip.
...s: Intelligen...

in search of an impotent man

BASED ON THE BESTSELLER BY GABY HAUPTMANN

HEINER LAUTERBACH DIRK BACH WIGALD BONING

SMELLING good. Current favorite is Davidoff's Echo.

ADIDAS, his running gear of choice

Dingdong . . .

From page A2-3

doesn't fall off even when I bow my head. The lens is changeable. The lighter shade is more suitable for golf.

"I actually want to show you my favorite Ralph Lauren shades, but I can't remember where I put it.

"My wife bought me this Kenneth Cole watch last Christmas. Jessa and I wanted to buy a Christmas gift for someone when we chanced upon this watch. I tried this on. *Bagay sa akin.* Jessa had already bought me a Christmas gift, but she said she'd buy it if I really liked it. We decided to give Jessa's supposed Christmas gift to me to a friend instead. It was a Tumi wallet."

"Jessa also gave me a Rolex before we got married. I use this for formal wear. Guess gave me a watch when I attended one of their parties. I rarely wear this but when I do, people really notice.

"My favorite belt is a black leather one with silver-colored designs. It looks good on stage. It's perfect with blue jeans and a white shirt."

FRAGRANCE. "My current favorite scent is Davidoff's Echo. I discovered it by accident. Jessa and I were aboard a plane when I saw an advertisement for Echo in one of the magazines that I was reading. Didn't Davidoff make Cool Water? I said maybe this also smells good. I got one the moment we stepped out of the plane. I started using this only in October.

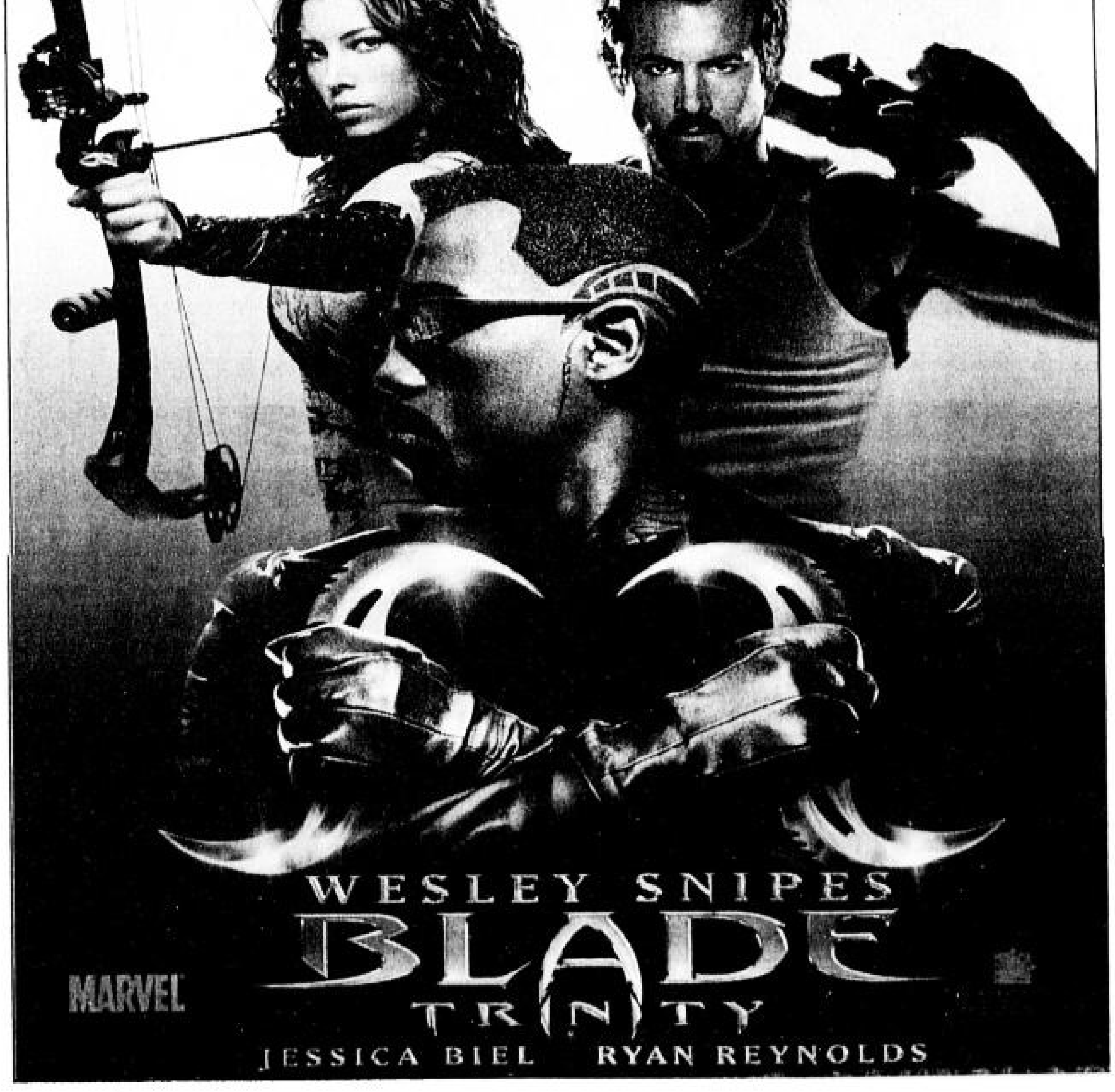
"Next to Echo is Polo Blue. I use it for casual wear. Bulgari's Extreme is for more formal occasions. I also like Carolina Herrera's 212."

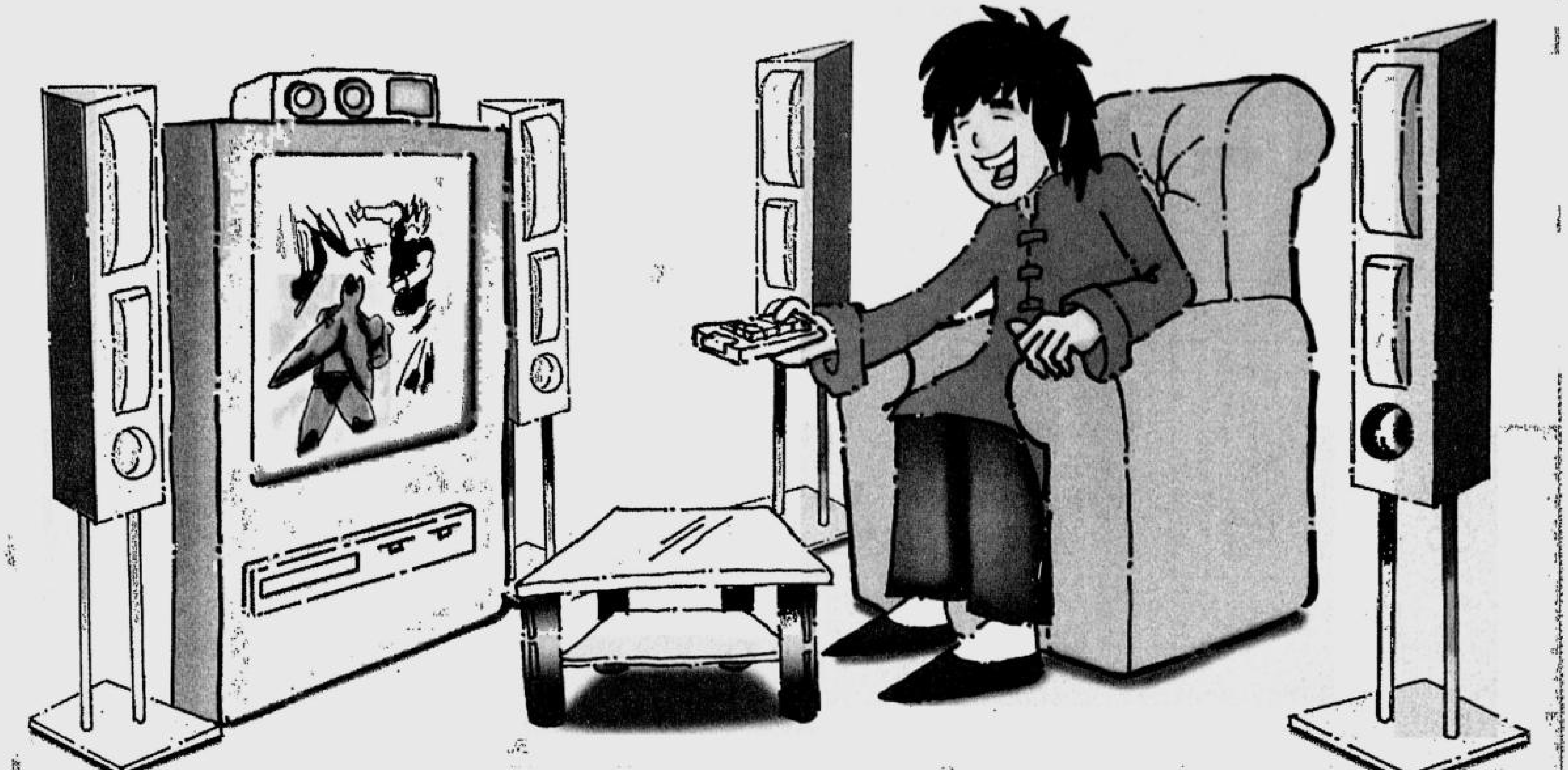
MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

NOW SHOWING

THE WORLD'S DEADLIEST SUPERHERO IS BACK !

From MARVEL, the creator of SPIDERMAN comes BLADE TRINITY... the final chapter





TV viewing habits around the world

Top European electronics company conducts a survey in 13 countries and draws some startling conclusions

NO MATTER how often we hear or read about living as one in a united world, stark differences among people will continue to exist. Home movie viewing habits, for instance. Have you ever wondered how different people from various cultures can be in the matter of enjoying home entertainment products?

Philips, Europe's top consumer electronics company, commissioned Harris Interactive to field a Global Home Entertainment Survey.

Conducted in April 2004, the survey included men and women owners of television sets, ages 20 to 55, in Belgium, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, United Kingdom and United States. Over 6,000 were interviewed online, via telephone, and in face-to-face interviews. Below are some interesting and fun facts from around the world, gathered as a result of that survey.

Best seat in the house

Survey respondents named the top reasons for watching movies at home as: 1) the comfort of the couch; 2) it is cheaper; and 3) it allows them to be themselves.

Most motivated by comfort were the Chinese (35 percent of respondents), and Indians (32 percent). Driven by austerity were Germans (32 percent) and Americans (29 percent). The Italians (25 percent) said it was important to just be themselves.

For the Indians, home is where the movies are.

In every country surveyed, respondents rated watching movies at home a much more intimate experience than going to the cinema. Indian (47 percent) and Italian (46 percent) respondents found it more social; Indian, Mexican and Brazilian consumers found it more enjoyable (72, 61 and 59 percent, respectively). And 57 percent of Indian respondents found home movie viewing much more fun.

ZAP!

- Indians want all the lights on while watching TV; Russians would rather have candles
- Mexicans and Americans are likely to schedule activities around favorite shows
- The Chinese enjoy watching the news, but not other stuff, with friends and relatives
- Russians feel watching sports on a big screen is 'better than sex'
- Spaniards would choose a flat-screen TV over a Rolex watch

Indians love the light

Whereas residents in most countries prefer watching movies with only some lights on, 32 percent of Indians were most likely to want all the lights on.

Brazilians and Mexicans reported wanting "complete darkness" most often (57 and 46 percent of respondents, respectively) and Russians (28 percent) registered the highest preference for candlelight viewing.

In India, Mexico, the United States and United Kingdom, more than in other countries, respondents were likely to schedule daily activities around favorite TV shows. The Spaniards were the least likely to coordinate plans around the TV set.

Indians reported inviting friends over to watch television with them most frequently—27 percent said more than once a week.

Chinese respondents were the least likely to invite friends and family over, with only 18 percent doing so. They are most likely (72 percent) to prefer watching TV at home with their partner/immediate family. They were, however, the most likely to invite others over to watch the news (48 percent).

Across most countries, movies and sporting events topped the list of programming to be viewed with friends and family.

'Must see' for Chinese

Regular TV shows were cited as programs not to be missed by respondents in China, the Netherlands, UK and the US.

Other included TV movies (Belgium, Italy, Spain, Russia and India), Summer Olympics (Germany and Mexico), regular soap operas (France) and season finales (Brazil).

Respondents in China (41 percent) were highly likely to preserve the 2004 Summer Games (August, in Athens) by recording it, trailing only Mexico (45 percent) and Brazil (42 percent).

In all countries, the Olympics' opening and closing ceremonies, soccer and track and field events were the most likely to be recorded. As many Indian respondents were likely to record tennis and gymnastics events as they were to record soccer.

Respondents in seven countries agreed that the main reason to watch a sporting event on TV, rather than going to the game, is in order to "see the action better."

Americans said the cheapness factor reigned supreme in the inclination to watch sports on TV (40 percent). Consumers in Germany (33 percent), Spain (25 percent) and Russia (10 percent) agreed; whereas those in Italy and Brazil just did not want to travel.

Better than sex?

The respondents were asked to compare watching sports on a big-screen TV to other favorite consumer activities. At least 77 percent of the Indians said it was better than "being at the games," 64 percent of the Chinese said it was better than an "expensive meal at a favorite restaurant" or "a night on the town," and 25 percent of the Russians said it was better than sex.

When asked what they would sacrifice for a month for a new home theater system, the Americans were most likely to give up leisure shopping (47 percent of respondents) and going out (39 percent), the Russians would give up chocolates (52 percent), drinking (48 percent), smoking (40 percent) and sex (23 percent). Americans and Brits (21 and 20 percent, respectively) were the next most likely to choose celibacy for a home theater. Spaniards were least likely to give up anything (64 percent said "none").

No less than 30 percent of Indian respondents would rather have a flat screen TV than go on a luxury vacation/cruise. The Russians (52 percent), French (50 percent) and Spaniards (49 percent) were the most likely to choose a flat TV over a Rolex, with the Italians and the Dutch falling close behind (46 percent). Fifty percent of Russians and 34 percent of Belgians would rather have a flat TV than an expensive piece of art.

Universally, consumers in every country rated the family room as the best room to have a flat TV in their dream house, followed by the bedroom.

Wait 'til I get home, please

Proving that one's home entertainment system is "personal," 35 percent of Indians found no reason good enough to let their spouse/significant other purchase a piece of expensive home entertainment equipment without them. Seventeen percent said they would agree only if they were cast in a reality TV show and wanted their spouses to watch.

A total 28 percent of the Americans and 24 percent of the Brits would allow it if they were "in a coma." Mexicans, Brazilians and Germans (33, 29, and 22 percent, respectively) would allow it if the TV broke while they were away. The French were most inclined to let it happen (22 percent of respondents) if it meant they could buy something equally expensive for themselves.

Of the Chinese respondents, 11 percent said the children in their homes got to decide what to watch on TV. According to the survey, Mexican children were the only other group more likely to be permitted to do the same.

Picture quality tops

If they had the appropriate facilities and equipment, almost half (49 percent) of the Chinese respondents said that they would like to access digital content from their PCs in the bedroom.

After picture quality, consumers in India and China were attracted to a unique lighting system (44 and 24 percent, respectively). This places China and India among the top three countries to want this feature.

Indian consumers were the biggest entertainers, with 71 percent preferring to entertain than be entertained. While Indians liked to be in the limelight entertaining, Chinese respondents preferred to blend in, with only 16 percent liking to stand out in a crowd.

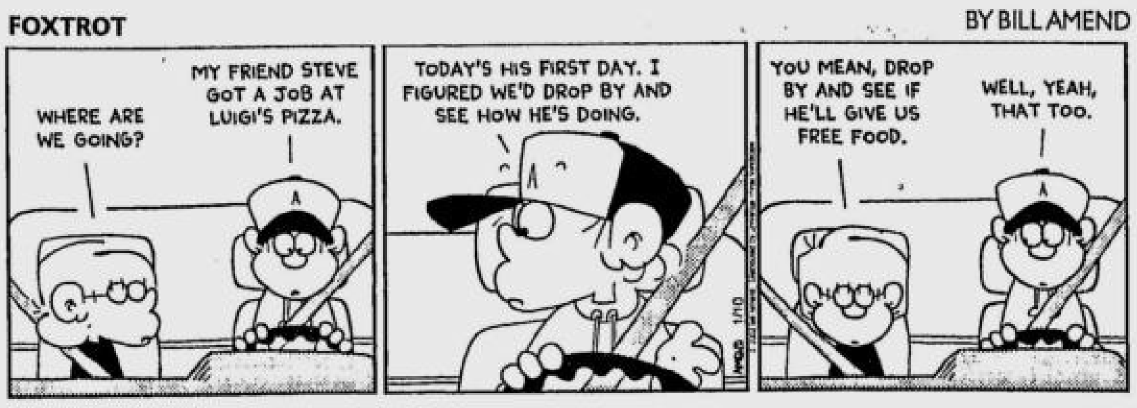
It therefore comes as no surprise that only 21 percent of Chinese respondents are willing to buy the latest products on the market.

Kumpleto Ang Bahay Mo Kapag May Landline...

IBA PA RIN ANG MAY LANDLINE!
PLDT

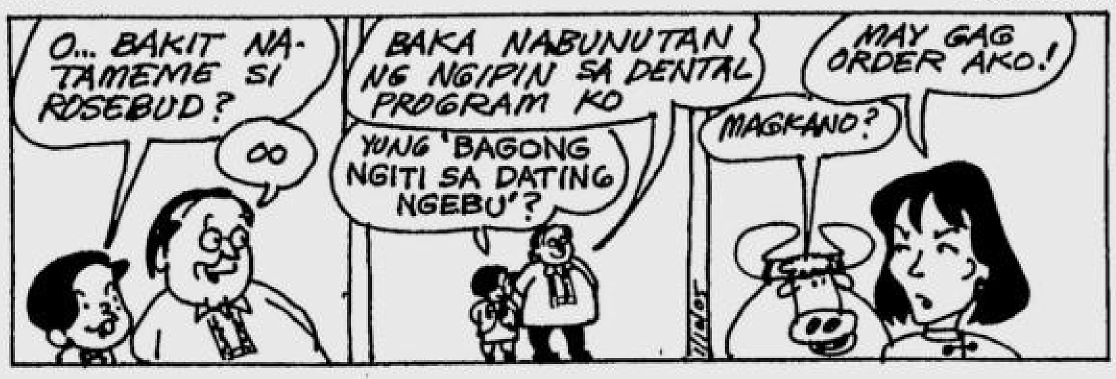
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHERE ARE WE GOING?
MY FRIEND STEVE GOT A JOB AT LUIGI'S PIZZA.
TODAY'S HIS FIRST DAY. I FIGURED WE'D DROP BY AND SEE HOW HE'S DOING.
YOU MEAN, DROP BY AND SEE IF HE'LL GIVE US FREE FOOD.
WELL, YEAH, THAT TOO.

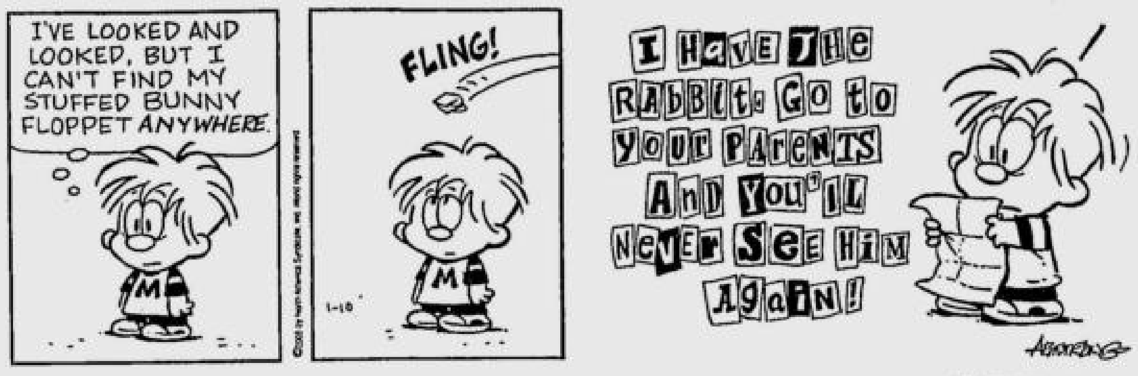
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


O... BAKIT NATAMEME SI ROSEBUD?
OO
BAKA NABUNUTAN NG NGIPIN SA DENTAL PROGRAM KO
YUNG 'BAGONG NGITI SA DATING NGEBU'?
MAGKANO?
MAY GAG ORDER AKO!

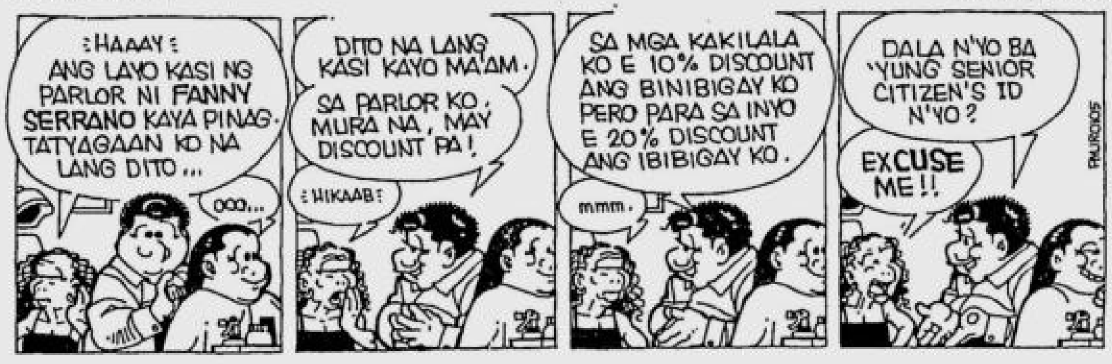
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'VE LOOKED AND LOOKED, BUT I CAN'T FIND MY STUFFED BUNNY FLOPPET ANYWHERE.
FLING!
1-10
I Have The Rabbit. Go to your Parents And You'll Never See Him Again!

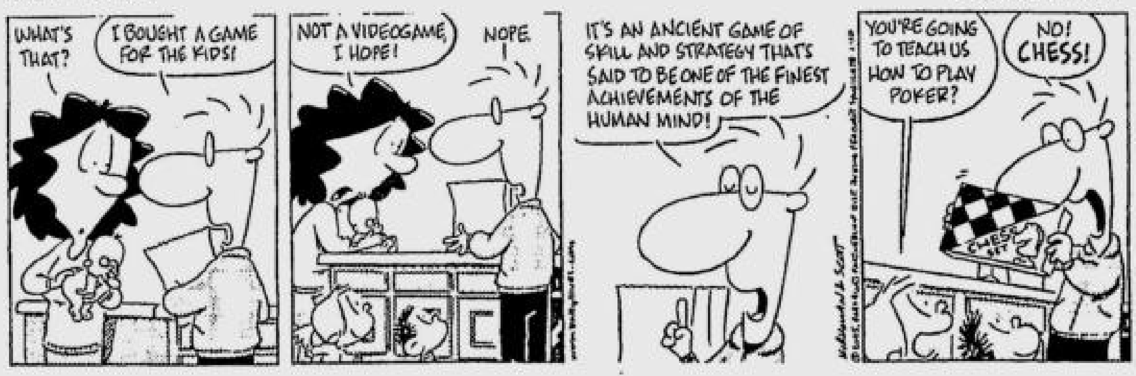
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


:HAAAY:
ANG LAYO KASI NG PARLOR NI FANNY SERRANO KAYA PINAGTATYAGAAN KO NA LANG DITO...
OOO...
DITO NA LANG KASI KAYO MA'AM.
SA PARLOR KO, MURA NA, MAY DISCOUNT PA!
:HIKAAB:
SA MGA KAKILALA KO E 10% DISCOUNT ANG BINIBIGAY KO PERO PARA SA INYO E 20% DISCOUNT ANG IBIBIGAY KO.
mmm.
DALA N'YO BA 'YUNG SENIOR CITIZEN'S ID N'YO?
EXCUSE ME!!

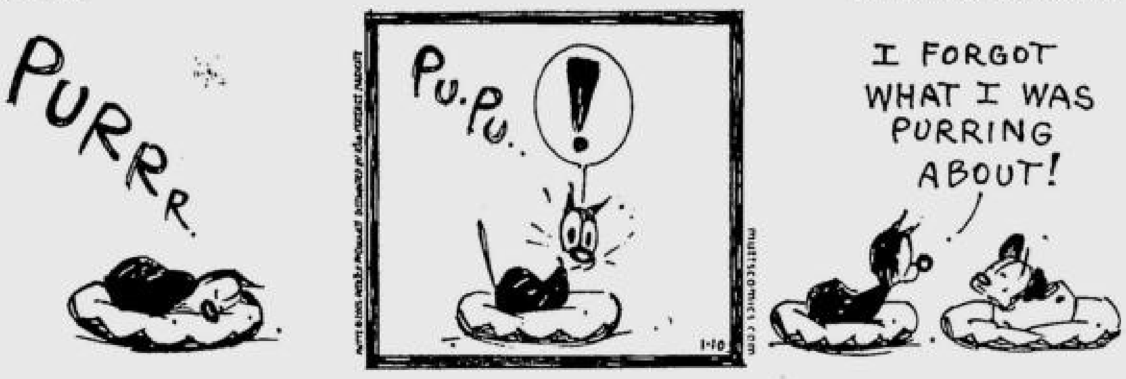
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S THAT?
I BOUGHT A GAME FOR THE KIDS!
NOT A VIDEOGAME, I HOPE!
NOPE.
IT'S AN ANCIENT GAME OF SKILL AND STRATEGY THAT'S SAID TO BE ONE OF THE FINEST ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE HUMAN MIND!
YOU'RE GOING TO TEACH US HOW TO PLAY POKER?
NO! CHESS!
CHESS SET

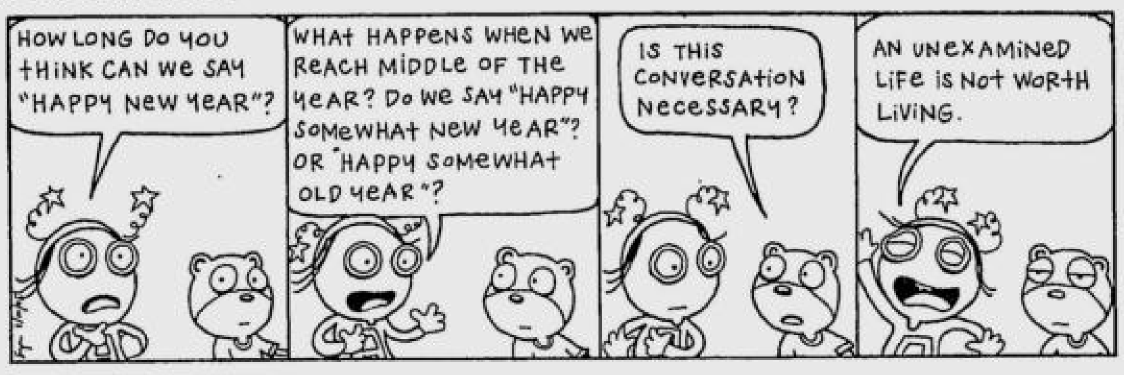
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


PURRRR
PU.PU..
!
1-10
I FORGOT WHAT I WAS PURRING ABOUT!

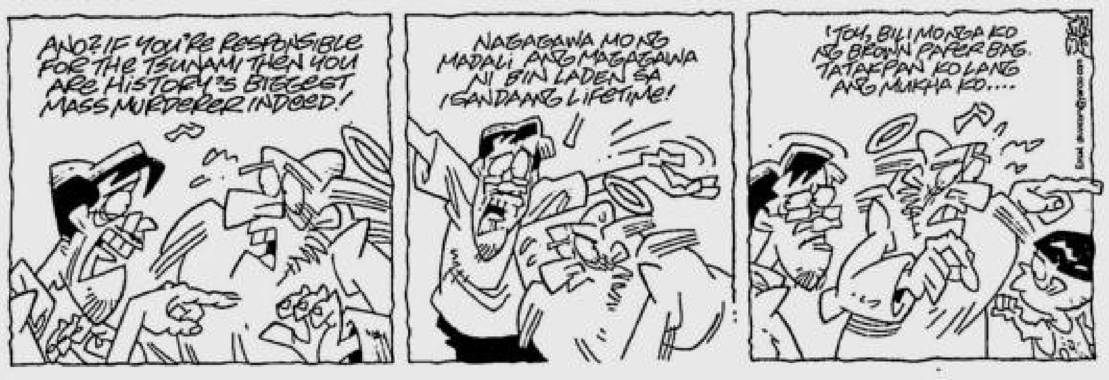
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HOW LONG DO YOU THINK CAN WE SAY "HAPPY NEW YEAR"?
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE REACH MIDDLE OF THE YEAR? DO WE SAY "HAPPY SOMEWHAT NEW YEAR"? OR "HAPPY SOMEWHAT OLD YEAR"?
IS THIS CONVERSATION NECESSARY?
AN UNEXAMINED LIFE IS NOT WORTH LIVING.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


ANO? IF YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TSUNAMI THEN YOU ARE HISTORY'S BIGGEST MASS MURDERER INDEED!
NAGAGAWA MO NG MADALI ANG NAGAGAWA NI BIN LADEN SA ISANDANG LIFETIME!
'TOY, BILI MO NGA KO NG BROWN PAPER BAG. TATAKPAN KO LANG ANG MUKHA KO....

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are hard-working and very focused in life. You aim to achieve. However, you are a private person, and many do not know your very personal side. You like the trappings of success that help you keep score. It amuses you. This year you will wind up certain cycles in order to create room for new ones. **Birthdate of:** Rod Stewart, singer; Pat Benatar, singer; George Foreman, boxer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today's New Moon might bring a new friend into your life. Conversations with female friends will be rewarding. Be open to meeting new people.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): For some reason, you will be in the public eye more than usual today. In other words, others are observing you. Think about this before you act today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today's New Moon urges you to explore new areas in your life. Plan to visit someplace you've never been to before. Read something entirely new. Learn something fascinating.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good time to make resolutions about how to resolve differences about shared property. This is the time to do it, especially if it affects your real estate situation.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today's New Moon opposes your sign. This is a signal that you should think about your closest friendships and partnerships. Are you happy with these relationships?

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is the perfect time to think about how to make improvements where you work. Each New Moon offers us a chance to make fresh beginnings. What do you want to introduce to your job?

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): New romance will come into the lives of many of you now. Friends could become lovers. Creative opportunities might arise. How can you enrich your relationships with children?

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Today's New Moon offers you an opportunity to make improvements in your relationships with family members or in your home in a general way. Make things warmer.

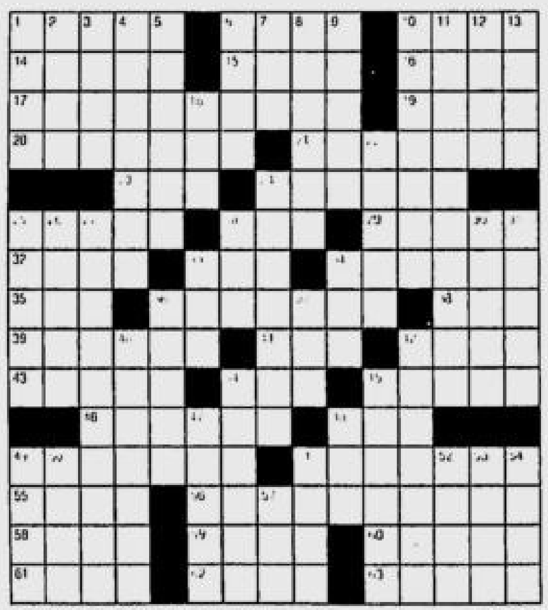
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You will meet new faces today or tomorrow. All kinds of new details will fall into your life. You might even buy a new mode of transportation very soon.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Many of you will either get a new job or be able to make improvements to your current job. In the past year, you have truly started to become more empowered.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today's New Moon is in your sign. You might feel a bit more emotional about things. It's a good time to shop for clothing or accessories to improve your image.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This New Moon encourages you to explore your inner world. Forget your focus on external things. After everything else disappears, what matters most to you?

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Earl Reed & Victor Fleming
Little Rock, AR

1/10/05

ACROSS
1 Taters
6 Bruce or Laura
10 Romanov ruler
14 Region of Asia Minor
15 Rio makeup?
16 __-bitty
17 Boring bombshell?
19 First name in spies
20 Way to sleep
21 Solomon, e.g.
23 Culbertson of bridge
24 Drive-in worker
25 Actress Woodard
28 Salary
29 Ejects
32 Dimensions: abbr.
33 Rally leader
34 West of Nashville
35 Spring mo.
36 Counter-culturalist of the '50s
38 Grand __ Opry
39 Clandestine
41 Fmr. Middle East alliance
42 USN rank
43 Sugary
44 Shout
45 Aspirations
46 Femme __
48 Bleacher bum
49 Altar boy
51 Storming
55 Rodgers' collaborator
56 Light sabre misplacer?
58 Sacramento arena
59 Bath's river
60 Zhou __
61 Ale or lager
62 In the mail
63 Gave cards

DOWN
1 Bro's bros
2 Equestrian sport
3 Two-toed sloth
4 Repasts
5 Equestrian's seat
6 Actress Tyne
7 Psyche division
8 Stage extension
9 Zenith's opposite
10 Break in the action
11 Philatelist's dance?
12 __ boy!
13 Tatum's dad
18 Old-time journalist Nellie
22 Quivered
24 Chess act
25 Gather
26 Skunk Pepe
27 "Police Academy" cast?
28 Shooter pellet
30 Marked Spanish accent?
31 Prophets
33 Family dog
34 N, E, W or S
36 Ford or White
37 Vote against
40 One with lots to sell
42 Disregard an offense
44 Divide or cling
45 Greeted
47 "__ Shrugged"
48 Remote
49 Peck in "Moby Dick"
50 Be concerned
51 Landlord's due
52 "La __ Bonita"
53 Actress Patricia
54 Sandy particles
57 Bart, to Homer

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

B	R	E	A	K	F	A	S	T	■	E	M	I	L	E
A	U	C	T	I	O	N	E	D	■	C	U	M	I	N
S	E	R	E	N	A	D	E	S	■	U	S	I	N	G
T	R	U	N	D	L	E	■	■	T	A	T	T	E	R
E	S	S	■	R	E	S	C	I	N	D	■	A	D	O
■	■	■	[illegible]	E	D	■	O	M	O	O	■	T	A	S
S	H	H	E	D	■	Q	U	A	T	R	A	I	N	S
P	O	E	T	■	L	U	N	G	E	■	V	O	C	E
I	L	L	A	T	E	A	S	E	■	F	I	N	E	D
T	E	E	■	H	A	C	K	■	A	I	D	■	■	■
F	I	G	■	I	N	K	L	I	N	G	■	P	O	L
I	N	A	P	E	T	■	■	C	O	M	P	E	T	E
R	O	T	A	S	■	C	H	A	M	E	L	E	O	N
E	N	E	R	O	■	D	O	M	I	N	A	T	E	D
S	E	D	A	N	■	S	W	E	E	T	N	E	S	S

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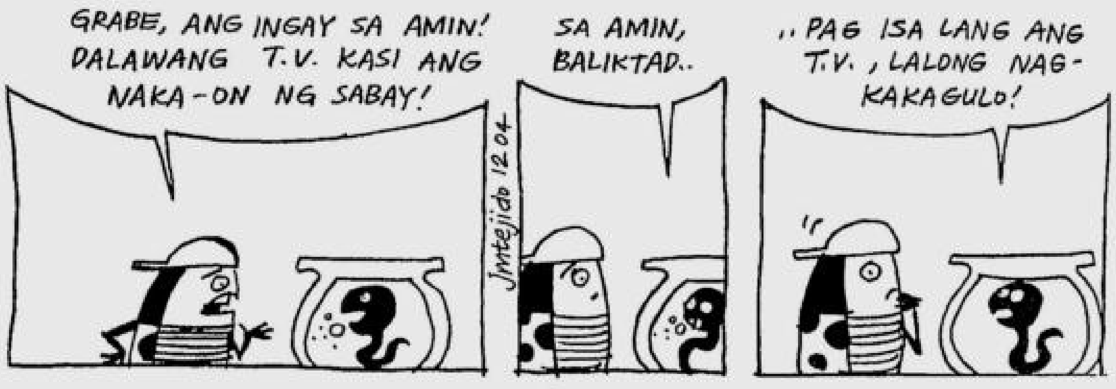
1/10/05

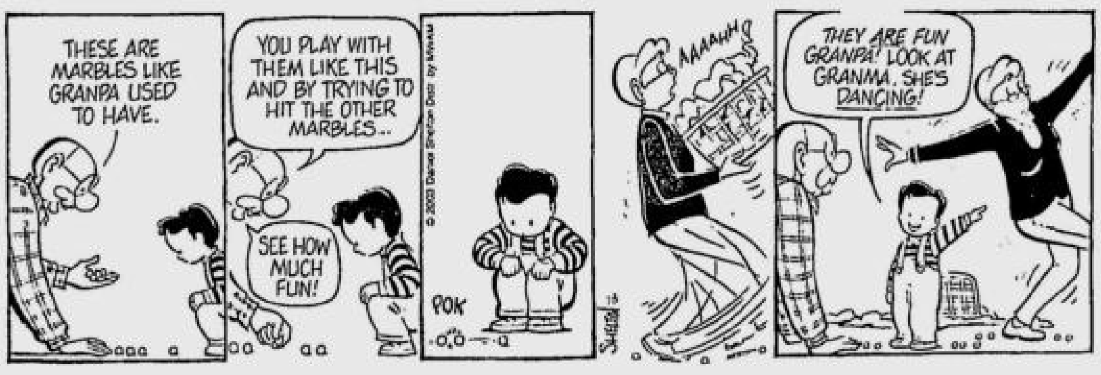
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


GRABE, ANG INGAY SA AMIN! DALAWANG T.V. KASI ANG NAKA-ON NG SABAY!
SA AMIN, BALIKTAD..
.. PAG ISA LANG ANG T.V., LALONG NAGKAKAGULO!
Jmtejido 12.04

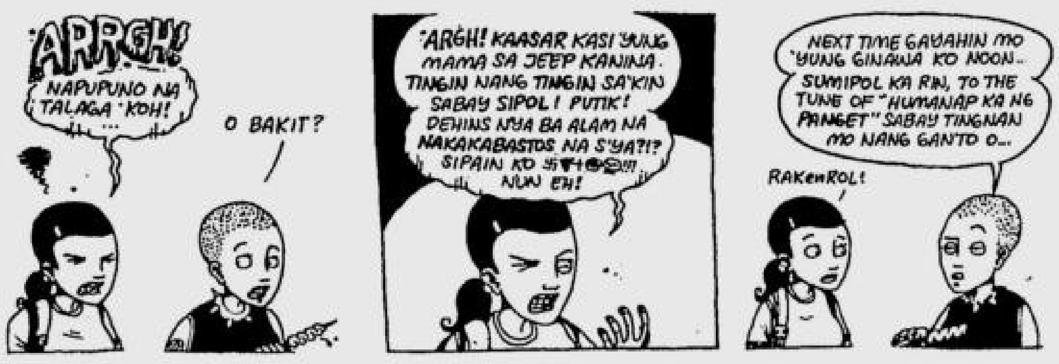
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


THESE ARE MARBLES LIKE GRANPA USED TO HAVE.
YOU PLAY WITH THEM LIKE THIS AND BY TRYING TO HIT THE OTHER MARBLES...
SEE HOW MUCH FUN!
POK
AAAAHH!
THEY ARE FUN GRANPA! LOOK AT GRANMA. SHE'S DANCING!

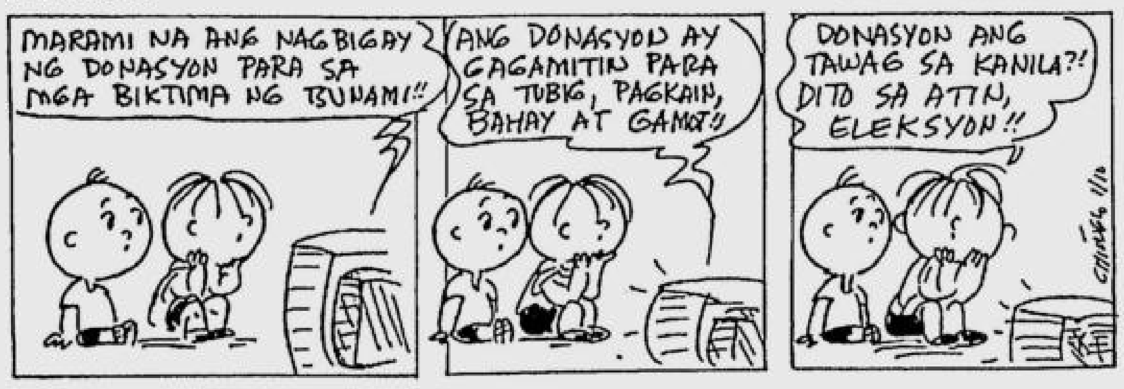
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ARRGH!
NAPUPUNO NA TALAGA 'KOH!
O BAKIT?
"ARGH! KAASAR KASI 'YUNG MAMA SA JEEP KANINA. TINGIN NANG TINGIN SA'KIN SABAY SIPOL! PUTIK! DEHINS NYA BA ALAM NA NAKAKABASTOS NA S'YA?!? SIPAIN KO S#!@@!!! NUN EH!
NEXT TIME GAYAHIN MO 'YUNG GINAWA KO NOON.. SUMIPOL KA RIN, TO THE TUNE OF "HUMANAP KA NG PANGET" SABAY TINGNAN MO NANG GANTO O..
RAKenROL!

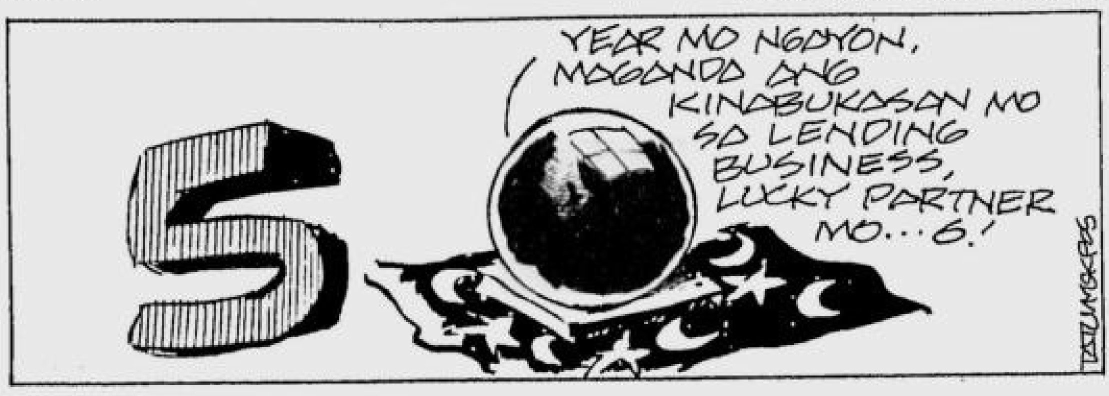
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MARAMI NA ANG NAGBIGAY NG DONASYON PARA SA MGA BIKTIMA NG TSUNAMI!!
ANG DONASYON AY GAGAMITIN PARA SA TUBIG, PAGKAIN, BAHAY AT GAMOT!!
DONASYON ANG TAWAG SA KANILA?! DITO SA ATIN, ELEKSYON!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


YEAR MO NGAYON, MAGANDA ANG KINABUKASAN MO SA LENDING BUSINESS, LUCKY PARTNER MO... 6!
5

Spying on missionaries living a travelogue life

CHICAGO—In the world of bug-eating, bungee-jumping reality television, here's a twist: Christian missionaries living a travelogue life while viewers watch their aches, pains and trials trying to spread the Gospel.

It makes for a surprisingly slick program, a cross between vintage Lowell Thomas and Paul of Tarsus with cheap hotels, dust storms, crowded peasant huts and an eye-level peek at a world where most tourists wouldn't dare dirty their loafers.

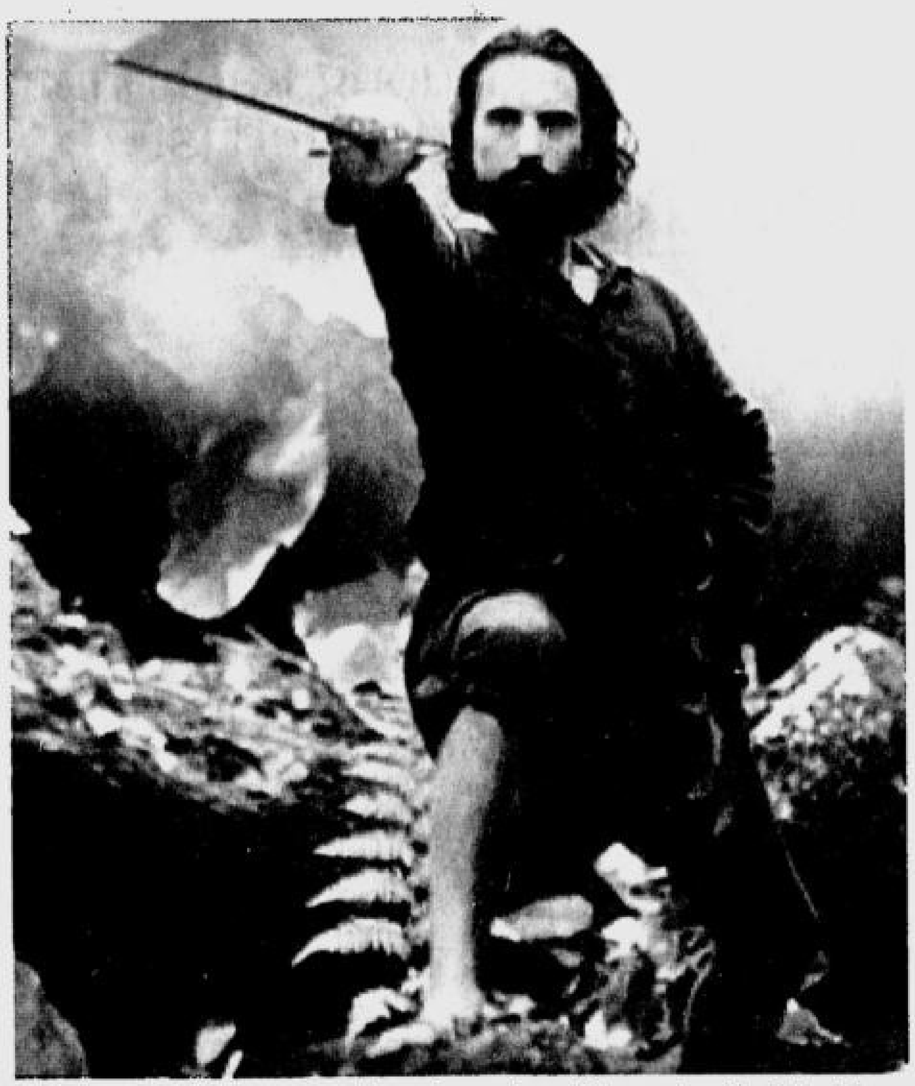
"Travel the Road" is now in its third season, reaching 250,000 to 300,000 US households per show on cable's Trinity Broadcasting Network, which bills itself as the world's largest Christian network, and uncounted others in about 100 other countries, according to executive producer Michael Scott.

Scott's brother Tim, 27, and 30-year-old William Decker are the two missionaries, doing their own filming to record an odyssey that has put them in dozens of countries from Tibet to Rwanda.

The pair has been cursed at and threatened with death in Ethiopia, betrayed in India by a thieving convert, attacked by leeches in Laos and bone-rattled for hours on end in the cargo holds of third-world transports.

No serious ills

Surprisingly, Michael Scott says, neither his brother nor Decker has suffered serious illness or injury.



Of course, not all of them are as big movie-worthy as this one played by Robert de Niro ages ago.

US cable viewers watch two brothers' aches, pains and trials as they try to spread the Gospel

"Although when they were in Sudan they were riding in a truck, a UN aid truck, and William was in the back filming and fell out the back," Scott said. "But he got up and wasn't hurt."

The pair has just finished filming their missionary work in Rwanda and Congo and at last report was heading for a return trip to Darfur in Sudan where a 22-month rebellion has killed 70,000 people and driven 1.6 million from their homes.

They were also recently in Afghanistan and plan to visit Somalia which, along with the previously mentioned African stops, will comprise a package of new shows airing next autumn, Scott said in an interview.

The reality rage in broadcasting in recent years—one that has produced shows ranging from Donald Trump putting hopeful apprentices through a trial by fire to cheated-on spouses confronting their mates in the act on camera—has whetted the public's appetite for the show's format.

"The timing couldn't be more perfect because of what was going on in secular television," he said. "It helped pave the way."

But "Travel the Road," he emphasizes, "is not about creating a television show. They're there to do the missionary work. The television show is more of a by-product."

A subtle touch

That said, much of the actual missionary work is covered not outright but by references or discussions after the fact. At times the pair seems to stumble into situations, looking for converts or even an interpreter to help carry their message. At one point they and some colleagues got flat-out lost.

But the resulting travelogue overlay and the human focus on the two travellers, along with highly professional editing and musical backgrounds, gives the package an entertainment value that goes beyond religion.

The shows are backed by non-denominational Challenge for Christ Ministries, which runs Vision Christian Bible College in Denver. The Scott brothers' father was a president of that school.

The project was originally supported by donations from "a select group of backers," Scott said, and now through donations and product sales—copies of the episodes that have been aired to date. They are being sold in stores and through the show's web site, http://www.traveltheroad.com.

When the travellers return home in April, Scott said, they will do a lecture tour across the United States. After that they may pack up their cameras, tapes and Bibles and head out yet again.

Reuters

The great debunkers

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DISCOVERY Channel has an interesting show that tests old beliefs and determines if they're myths or based on facts. Titled "Mythbusters" (8 a.m., Mondays), the program subjects traditional beliefs or folk and urban legends to scientific challenge and recreation, and ends with a definitive verdict: fact, or one more myth busted.

On Jan. 3, the three stories or beliefs for stringent verification or debunking were: 1) a sinking ship creates a vortex that sucks people down with it; 2) goldfish have tiny brains, so they remember things for only three seconds; and 3) an exploding trombone once knocked a band conductor into the audience.

The vortex theory was tested in different ways, with varying results. But the final test, with a seven-ton metal boat that was sunk on purpose, proved that no suction was created.

The goldfish's-three-second-memory myth was challenged by getting some aquarium goldfish to go through a maze and find food at the end.

They did it in something like 30 seconds, and over and over again, proving that fish *can* remember much longer than three seconds! The fish in our home happily agreed.

Discovery Channel show subjects traditional beliefs or folk and urban legends to scientific scrutiny

Finally, the tall tale about the trombone player who played a prank on his band's conductor involving a huge firecracker turned out to be just that: a tall tale.

The situation was recreated a number of times with a dummy standing in for the conductor. Increasingly bigger firecrackers and additional "shrapnel" were used, but the dummy still wasn't blown away into the audience.

"Mythbusters" is an enjoyable and educational show to watch because it makes use of scientific evidence, but in a lighthearted way. Still, the playful approach doesn't dilute the show's scientific element, so a lot of learning is to be had.

Do try to catch "Mythbusters." It could be an eye-opener for you, too. And you can appreciate its wacky way of using scientific principles to confirm or debunk some really unusual beliefs, which have become a part of our pop- and folk-cultural lore for a long, long time.

'Gone With the Wind'

WARNER Home Video has released a four-disc collector's edition DVD of "Gone With the Wind." The acclaimed film has been digitally restored in "Ultra Resolution," and offers more than five hours of extra features.

Highlights include the new 45-minute documentary, "Melanie Remembers: Olivia de Havilland Recalls 'Gone With the Wind,'" as well as the critically-acclaimed 1989 documentary, "The Making of a Legend: 'Gone With the Wind,'" produced by **L. Jeffrey** and **Daniel Mayer Selznick**, the sons of the film's legendary producer, **David O. Selznick**.

A 66-minute documentary on **Clark Gable** and a 45-minute documentary on **Vivien Leigh** are also included.

'Power Redefined'

CNN will focus on the powerful and political in a week of special programming in "CNN Connects: Power Redefined," from the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 29 at 8 p.m.

This is the first of four special events highlighting CNN's 25th anniversary. CNN's five-day World Economic Forum coverage runs from Jan. 26 to 30.

Hosted by **Jim Clancy**, "Power Redefined" will be presented in front of an invited audience of politicians, business executives and academics, and will tackle the questions: who has it, who wants it, who can bestow it, and who can take it away?

In addition, **Becky Anderson** will host editions of "Business International" live from Davos, as well an edition of "International Correspondents."

'Shall We Dance'

IN 1996, the Japanese film "Shall We Dance" was a sleeper hit. Now, Buena Vista International has produced the English version of the heartwarming love story, starring **Richard Gere, Jennifer Lopez** and **Susan Sarandon**.

In the new version, the life of a workaholic lawyer (Gere) takes an unexpected twirl when he follows a beautiful woman (Lopez) to a Chicago dance studio, and begins taking dance lessons from her. What starts as a romantic comedy soon turns into an exhilarating tale about finding passion in the most unexpected places.

'Elektra'

FROM the pages of Marvel Comics comes "Elektra," with **Jennifer Garner** playing the title role of the strong, mysterious and sexy heroine, a lethal synthesis of power and grace.

After recovering from seemingly mortal wounds, Elektra has severed all ties with the world, living only for her next assignment. But, she is soon forced to make a decision that could take her life in a new direction—or destroy her!

ARKDIA IDOL TJ Faeldon, a 21-year-old student of the University of Santo Tomas College of Music, recently won the talent search conducted by Arkdia Bar in Malate. TJ sang George Michael's "Us," to prevail over 100 contestants. The search started in September. In photo is TJ (center) with composer Vehnee Saturno, chair of the board of judges, emcee Jimmy Martinez, and judges Alessandra de Rossi and Oskar Peralta.

Reality TV, Brit style

LONDON—Reality show "Celebrity Big Brother" returned to British screens for a third series on Thursday.

The celebrities are Australian feminist Germaine Greer, actress Brigitte Nielsen, Happy Mondays star Bez, ex-Holby City actor Jeremy Edwards, horse racing pundit John McCririck, Kenzie from Blazin' Squad, DJ Lisa I'Anson and model Caprice.

They will spend the next 17 days locked up in a camera-filled house while millions watch live on television and over the Internet.

Keen gardener Greer, who is also vice president of Buglife, a charity dedicated to preserving Britain's rarest slugs, snails and spiders, found the garden an immediate disappointment. "It looks like a prison yard," she said.

The celebrities will compete for a prize fund of up to 50,000 pounds ($93,760), with proceeds divided equally among their chosen charities, while a percentage of money made from each public vote will be donated to the victims of the tsunami disaster.

Former boy band singer Mark Owen won the second series of "Celebrity Big Brother" in 2002.

Reuters

5-Days Lang
Mabilis
Ang Kabit,
Pang Negosyo
O
Internet...

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Free P150 worth of NDD (PLDT-PLDT) and/or Vibe Internet Pay per Surf

GOLDMINE AGENT Telesulit Subscriber
For Every Post-paid Sub Approved and Installed
Free P300 worth of Load on existing Telesulit line
For Every Pre-paid Sub Approved and Installed
Free P150 worth of Load on existing Telesulit line

Note: *Credits/loads will automatically be credited to the account of the Goldmine Agent and will expire after one (1) month. Unused credits/loads will not be carried over to the succeeding month.*

4. To qualify for the cash prizes at the end of the promo period, Goldmine Agents should have at least fifty (50) approved and installed subscriptions. All qualified Goldmine Agents will be ranked according to the most number of approved applications and awarded the following:

Category and Cash Prize (in PhP)

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Diamond Category:
Top 6-15 / Php 150,000
Gold Category:
Top 16 – 25 / Php 75,000
Ruby Category:
Top 26 – 35 / Php 50,000
Silver Category:
Top 36 – 45 / Php 20,000
Bronze Category:
Top 46 – 55 / Php 10,000
Pearl Category:
Top 56 – 65 / Php 5,000

5. Promo period is from January 10, 2005 to May 10, 2005. Deadline for submission of referrals with complete required documents is on May 10, 2005, 5:00pm.

6. Successful new applications credited to the account of the Goldmine Agent are non-transferable.

7. The Goldmine Agent is not an employee of PLDT. He is not authorized to collect money or any other monetary form from the telephone applicants.

8. All existing promos at the time of the application shall apply to the applicant. PLDT will confirm availability of every line application by mailing an official notice to the subscriber. PLDT will install the line within five (5) days from receipt of payment. All subscriptions are covered by an 18-month contract or lock-in period. Pre-termination rates of P2,500 apply.

9. Standard policies of PLDT on Credit and Collection shall apply. PLDT reserves the right to disqualify any Goldmine Agent from the Program if any violation is committed on existing policies on subscription, credit and collection and/or commit acts of fraud.

See flyers for details.

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CAP eyes buyout of planholders

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

BELEAGUERED College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. is set to propose the buyout of all planholders and a potential initial public offering should it succeed in inviting a new investor to assume control of the company's trust fund.

Industry sources familiar with the matter said CAP would write to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) about its proposal to settle the present concerns of its nearly 800,000 planholders.

SEC sources said no formal proposal has been presented as of Friday last week, although a CAP official had informed the SEC verbally of its plan. The SEC has declined to comment until it has seen CAP's proposal. CAP has to submit its written proposal and seek approval from the Commission en banc.

The first phase of its proposal would involve giving planholders the option to be bought out by CAP using cash raised by a consortium of private equity funders. These private funders, which may be managed by investment banks, would help CAP raise funds to pre-terminate existing education plans.

CAP would buy out clients who would express their desire to pre-terminate their education plans or recover the amount they used to buy those plans.

Planholders would be paid based on the termination values of their respective plans or the amount paid to a planholder when he chooses to cash out and could not wait for the plan to mature at a certain date. The termination value would vary depending on which year the planholder terminates his plan. If it is terminated on the plan's seventh year from the date of purchase, the planholder may get 75 percent of the gross price. If it is on the ninth year, the planholder receives 100 percent.

In order to improve CAP's debt-to-equity ratio and wipe out its liabilities, the second phase would involve the conversion of the trust fund liabilities into equity. This would result in the transfer of ownership of the trust fund to the private equity funders through an issuance of either common or preferred stock.

The private equity funders could then develop, turn around, or sell these trust fund assets, which consist of investments in shares, securities and pieces of property worth an estimated P8.5 billion.

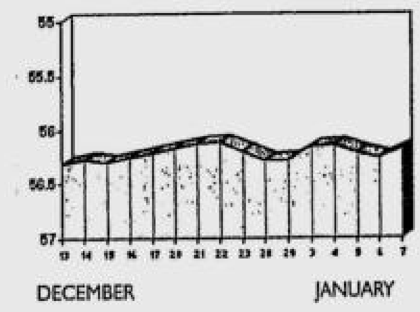
The final phase would involve the sale of the private equity funder's stake in the trust fund to another equity investor. This could involve a possible public offering of CAP after its trust fund liabilities shall have been settled.

CAP has been hard pressed to settle mounting tuition payments since its permit to sell securities was suspended by the SEC last year.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



P 56.175 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 7, 2005

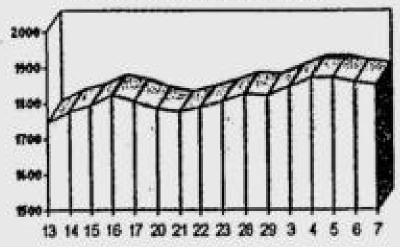
¥ 104.59 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Jan. 7, 2004

GOLD: $ 422.50-423.00
per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 7, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Cautious trading seen this week

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

THE STOCK market's dash at the start of the year seemed a bit too soon.

It looks like after a windfall of nearly 30 points in the first week of 2005, stock analysts said the market would try to be more careful about making big bets too quickly.

Analysts said that among investors' biggest concerns were rising interest rates, which normally crimp corporate earnings since these bloat borrowing costs in line with expansion plans.

"Given the lack of new positive news and fears of a possible interest rate hike by the central bank, given the uptick in December inflation, investors are more cautious. Government, however, remains optimistic that it may get relief from the drop in world oil prices and as supply disruptions caused by the recent calamities are resolved," BPI Trade said in a weekly report.

"At the moment, the market is stalling a bit as investors reassess the backdrop for stocks after this year's strong start. This could pull the index back to 1,830 before it resumes its ascent. Investors are cautious of the uncertainties abroad and the prospects of higher money market rates. Whether or not the early gains can set the direction for this year's trading remains to be seen, as the country has yet to achieve a sense of fiscal austerity," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc.

For the week, the Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shot up 28.95 points or 1.6 percent to 1,851.78. Within the week, the index

CAUTIOUS/B4

OFW remittances seen boosting property sector

By Doris C. Dumlao

INVESTMENT Bank Credit Suisse First Boston is bullish on investment spending in the Philippines this year as inflows from overseas Filipino workers start to perk up the property sector.

In its December country report, CSFB projected that the growth of investment spending would remain robust at 8-10 percent, fueled by a rebound in the construction sector.

The report, titled "Philippines: Fiscal Dynamics Unlike Other Emerging Market Debt Defaults, While Economy Likely To Be Robust In 2005," noted that unlike the earlier business cycles when OFW remittances were used for consumption spending, the funds were now fueling investments.

It noted that domestic investment spending expanded by 13-15 percent last year.

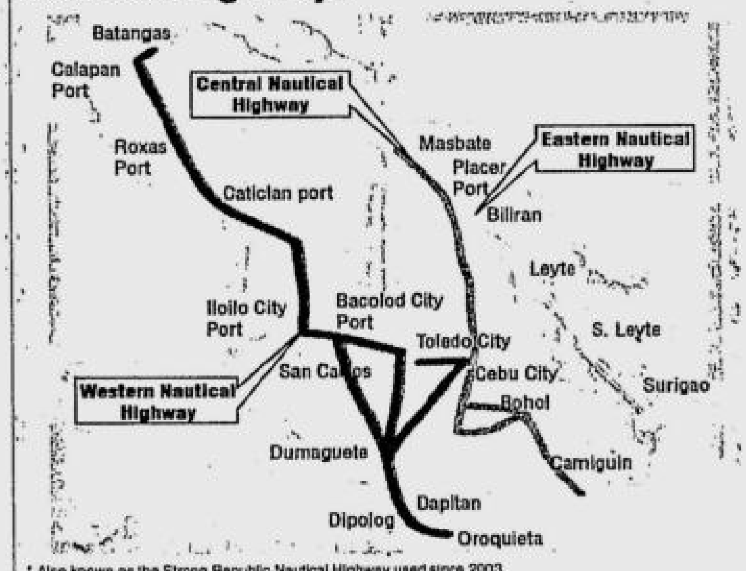
"We believe that part of the strong surge in overseas foreign worker remittances is being invested in housing," CSFB said.

"We expect these dynamics to continue in 2005, further fueling the pickup in low- to middle-end residential property where supply constraints are now emerging and pushing aggregate prices up," it said.

OFW/B2

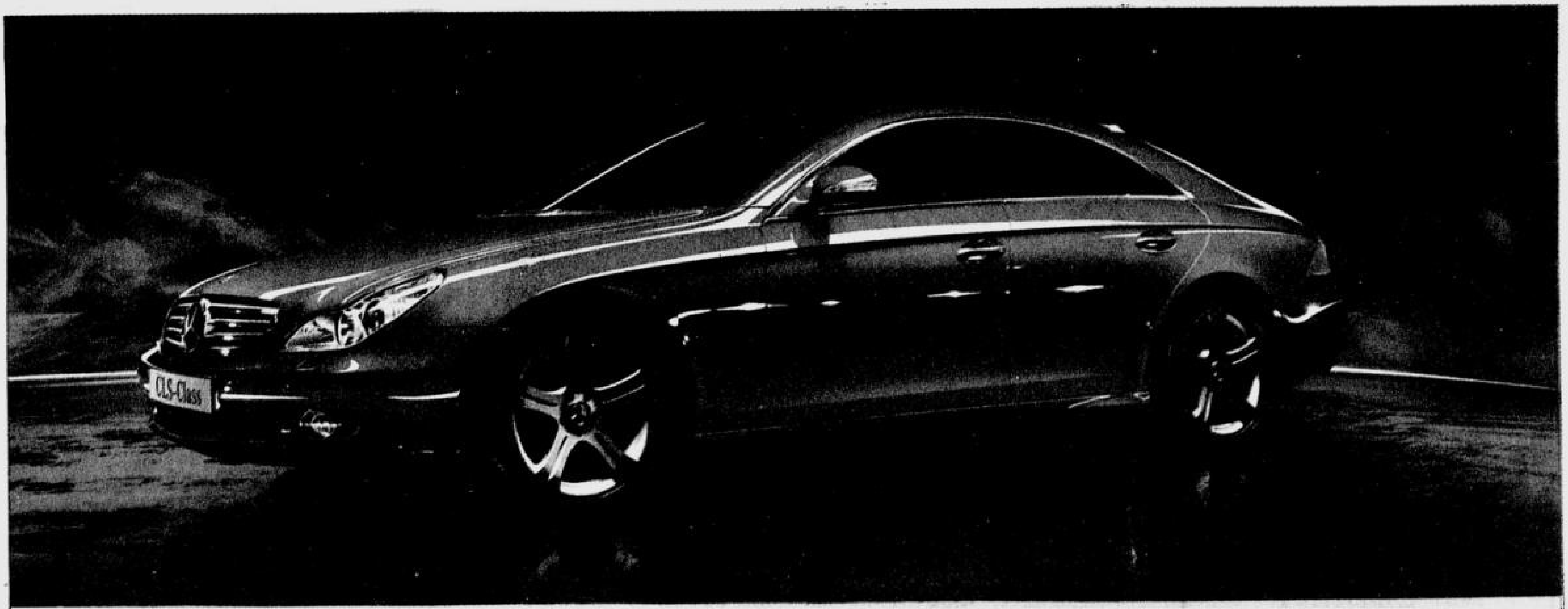
Figures that matter in our nation's life

Nautical Highways



* Also known as the Strong Republic Nautical Highway used since 2003
Source: Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, 2004-2010

AMONG this administration's medium-term plan is the completion of the nautical highway system that is supposed to link the entire country. Introduced in 2003, this system, popularly known as Roro (roll-on/roll-off), has reduced costs of passengers



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Wow Mindanao

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

THE PAST year has brought insurmountable pressures that tested Mindanao's resilience once again. These pressures were felt in both political and socioeconomic aspects, forcing many to quiver in anticipation, if not dread. And yet, at the end of the day, the Mindanaoans still recognize and celebrate the goodness and greatness there was.

Investments

Mindanao started 2004 with an impressive performance, maintaining its stability until the end of the year. Local investment was upbeat, creating 930 new jobs and injecting around P1.8 billion worth of investments. Last year also became a window of many opportunities for Mindanao as key cities captured the interest of call center companies for possible expansion sites. The first contact center, CyberCity, chose the city of Davao and set up operations mid last year. Soon afterwards, Cagayan de Oro, General Santos and Zamboanga seem to have gained enormous popularity among leasing contact centers in terms of investment opportunities. In addition to that, these cities experienced a sudden wave of recruitment and in this industry alone, jobs were created for almost 6,000 locals. The highly trainable, adaptable and English-proficient workforce of Mindanao has created its own demand from the "sunshine industry." With this trend that started last year, we can surely expect the continuous influx of call center companies to Mindanao over the next few years.

Ten new projects worth P380 million were registered with the BOI and the Phividec Industrial Authority in Cagayan de Oro City in the first semester of 2004. All of the eight have already started commercial operations.

Exports and imports

Agriculture was, and still is, the major driving force behind Mindanao's economic progress the past year, making it undeniably clear that it is the food basket of the Philippines. Soccksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato Province, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos), alone, enabled Mindanao to sustain its niche in the country's tuna and asparagus market. Livestock production grew favorably—particularly carabao, swine, cattle and goat—while chicken production also increased last year, right after the 2003 scare of Avian Flu. Palay and corn production also expanded. This was mainly due to the availability of quality seeds during the period. The programs of the National Corn Board and the Department of Agriculture were certainly a big boost to the corn sector.

The strongest export bet, Southern Mindanao's bananas, topped this year's growth contribution, while value-added and semi-processed products, such as pineapple juice and concentrates, nickel ores, desiccated coconut, and oil-cake, helped boost exports. The Islamic Republic of Iran, our new trading partner for bananas and pineapples, contributed more than $14 million worth of Mindanao's export receipts. In general, Mindanao as an export-driven economy still enjoys a 29.7-percent growth in its trade surplus. Imports, on the other hand, dropped by 39 percent. We still import flat rolled products of iron, wheat, milk, iron ore and concentrates, and kraft liners.

Regional trade cooperation

The Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-Eaga) celebrated its 10th year last March 2004, marking a decade-long contribution in strengthening economies through regional cooperation. South Phoenix Airways just opened a twice-a-week flight for the Davao-Zamboanga-Sandakan (Sabah) route. This is another major achievement for BIMP-Eaga. Developing air linkages such as this is expected to hasten economic movement among BIMP-Eaga countries. A new member of the regional trade cooperation is Australia and with this recent development, the prospects

MINDANAWORLD/ B6

OFW ...

From page B1

In 2004, it said about 20-25 percent of residential sales in Metro Manila had been from overseas buyers, a majority of whom are Filipino professionals working abroad.

"Around 30 percent of overseas workers hold professional jobs who are now contemplating on setting up businesses in their home towns, have a vacation home, or simply coming home to retire after many years of working abroad. This has led to a pickup in the construction sector," CSFB said.

The bank's favorable outlook on the property sector was anchored on a benign interest rate environment as it projected that the benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate would rise by only 40 basis points this year.

"We believe interest rates have to rise by more than 150 basis points in 2005 in order to dampen the demand for residential property," CSFB said.

Outside of the property sector, CSFB has not seen a significant pickup in investment in plant and equipment or machinery.

"However, anecdotally we do see signs of capacity expansion by existing IT hardware firms, some influx of Japanese foreign direct investment in the auto parts and components and pickup in medical transcription activities," it said.

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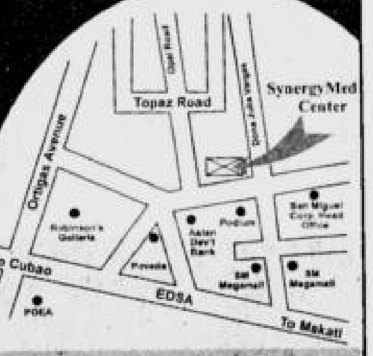

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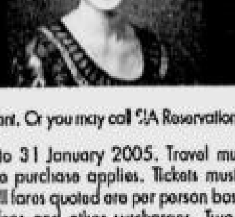

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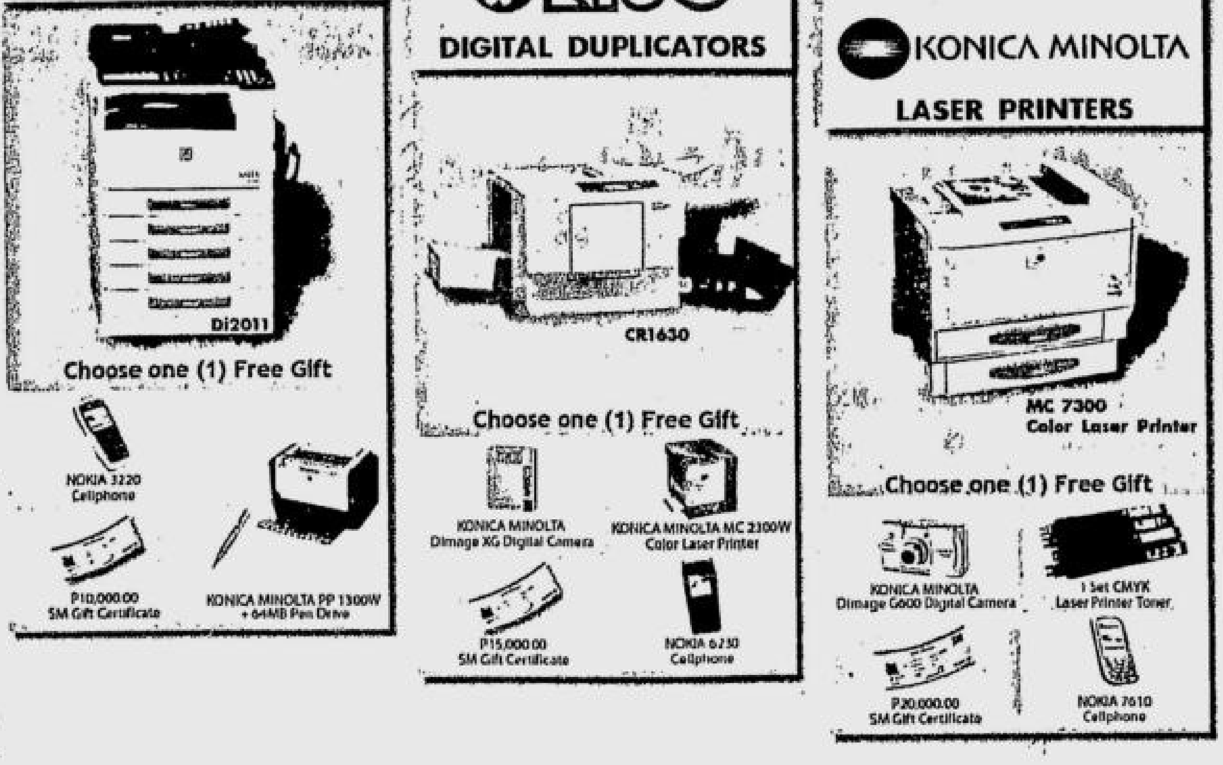

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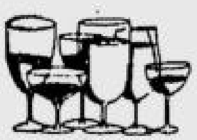

Victor C. Agustin

THE COUNTRY'S shallow pool of polo players further shrank in yesterday's opening game for the season, after Ricky Yabut was prevented from participating by his former sponsor, Albert "Bobby" Aguirre of Banco Filipino/BF Homes fame.

According to the grapevine, the Manila Polo Club's polo committee chair, Iñigo Zobel, had no choice but to drop Yabut after Aguirre threatened to pull out his pure breeds that he annually lends to the club for the games.

In addition, Aguirre has been underwriting the costs of staging the rich man's game, providing not only the prizes, but also the imported players, the canapés and the endless rounds of champagne, as well as the babe-licious beauties that lend dazzle to the annual social event.

Even a last-minute written appeal to the club board by Yabut's sister, Denise, fell on deaf ears.

The Yabuts, apparently, are not proprietary members of the club, but had been merely riding on the coattails of the honorary membership provided by the club to their late father, the long-time macho mayor of Makati and, in the case of Denise, by her former husband, telecom heir Antonio Cojuangco Jr.

According to the grapevine, the blackballing of Ricky Yabut was a result of the latter leaving an Aguirre real estate company, not wanting to get caught in between the particularly nasty Aguirre family feud.

Academic freedom upheld

LOST in the holiday rush was a Supreme Court decision upholding the academic freedom of the University of the Philippines and the right of the state university to competently choose whom among its students are entitled to honors.

The ruling came after a 2000 European Languages graduate, Nadine Rosario Morales, sued the university board of regents

COCKTALES/B4

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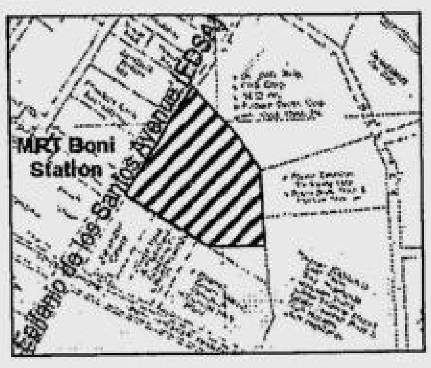

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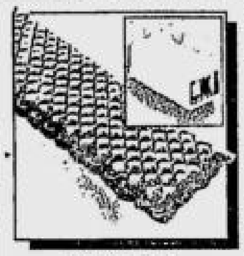

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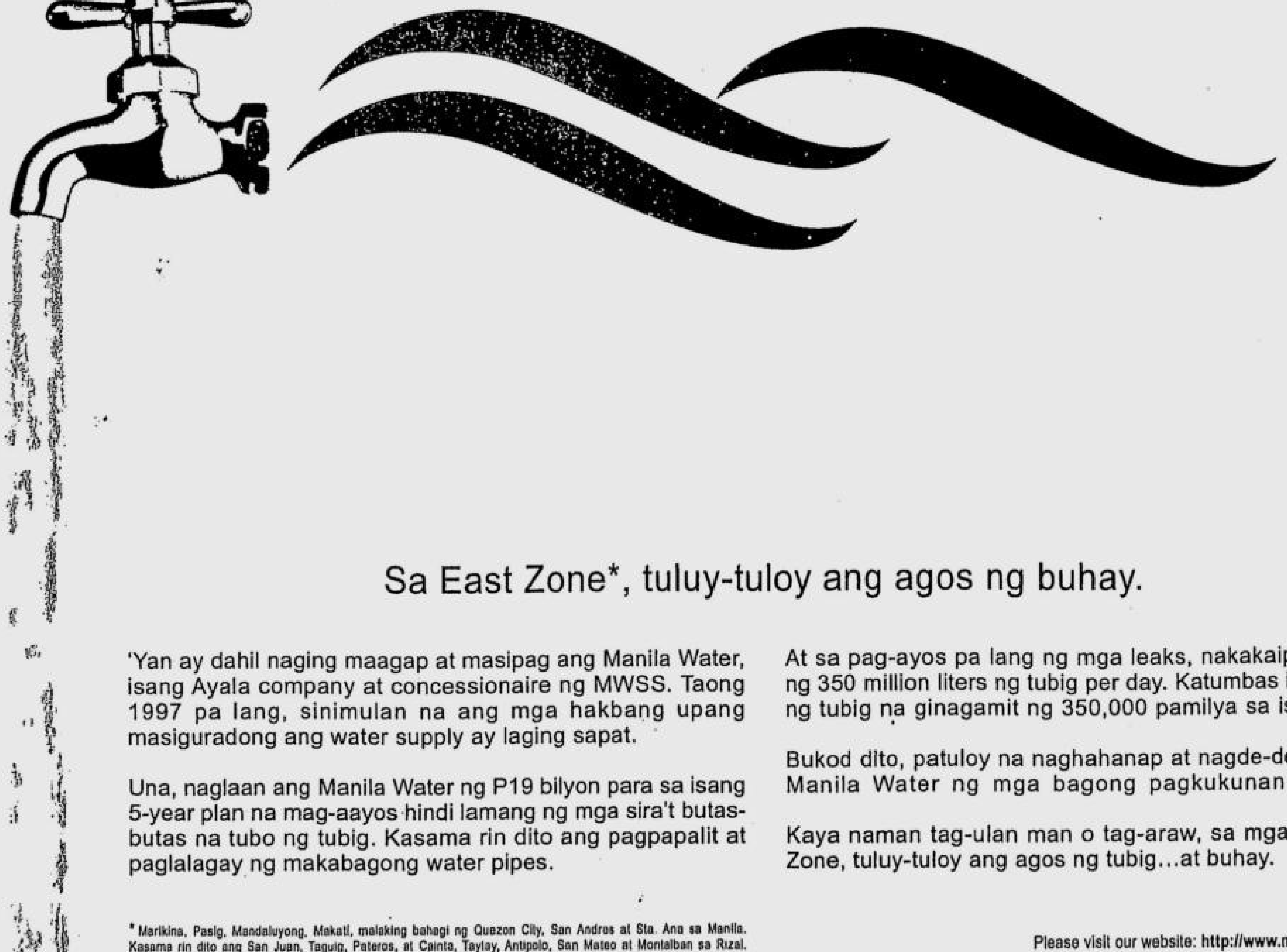

Sa East Zone*, tuluy-tuloy ang agos ng buhay.

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Una, naglaan ang Manila Water ng P19 bilyon para sa isang 5-year plan na mag-aayos hindi lamang ng mga sira't butas-butas na tubo ng tubig. Kasama rin dito ang pagpapalit at paglalagay ng makabagong water pipes.

At sa pag-ayos pa lang ng mga leaks, nakakaipon pa sila ng 350 million liters ng tubig per day. Katumbas ito ng dami ng tubig na ginagamit ng 350,000 pamilya sa isang araw.

Bukod dito, patuloy na naghahanap at nagde-develop ang Manila Water ng mga bagong pagkukunan ng tubig.

Kaya naman tag-ulan man o tag-araw, sa mga taga-East Zone, tuluy-tuloy ang agos ng tubig...at buhay.

* Marikina, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Makati, malaking bahagi ng Quezon City, San Andres at Sta. Ana sa Manila. Kasama rin dito ang San Juan, Taguig, Pateros, at Cainta, Taytay, Antipolo, San Mateo at Montalban sa Rizal.

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SMC sees bright prospects in bid for Australian firm

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's biggest food and beverage firm, sees major opportunities in line with its regional leap after it announced its bid for control of Australian dairy giant National Foods Ltd., sources familiar with SMC's activities told the INQUIRER.

For one, should its takeover materialize, SMC is looking at possible synergies with Berri Ltd., which could be its flagship brand for Australia. It is also studying ice cream production in the region after it relaunched last year its Magnolia ice cream brand, one of the most recognizable and enduring brands in the Philippines, in response to public demand.

In the 1960s, Nestlé S.A. of Switzerland and San Miguel formed a joint-venture company dubbed Nestlé Phils. Inc. San Miguel later sold its 45-percent stake in Nestlé Phils. to Nestlé S.A. but retained ownership of the Magnolia brand. Under the terms of the sale to Nestlé S.A. was a non-compete clause that prevented SMC from entering into the ice cream business for five years. The non-compete clause expired in 2003.

"The option and opportunity for San Miguel to reenter the market is open, as in the minds of consumers, Magnolia ice cream never left the market. People have always known Magnolia as a quality brand of ice cream. Loyalty to the brand is strong because it is part of our heritage," SMC chair Eduardo Cojuangco, Jr. had said earlier.

San Miguel, through subsidiary Magnolia Inc., has a processing plant in Cavite. Magnolia currently manufactures and markets butter, cheese and margarine. The company accounts for nine out of every 10 non-refrigerated margarine products in the Philippines and four out of every five refrigerated margarine products. Plans are being drawn up to build an ice cream production plant at the Laguna industrial park.

In Australia, San Miguel recently partnered with Berri Ltd., Australia's leading juice company where it now holds a 50-percent stake. It also owns 100 percent of Australian beer brewer J. Boag & Sons Ltd., which generates roughly US$10 million in net profits a year.

San Miguel recently announced its A$1.78 billion ($1.37 billion) bid to acquire National Foods, Australia's biggest publicly listed dairy company. San Miguel's offer, equivalent to A$6 a share of National Foods, topped the A$5.45 a share bid of New Zealand dairy giant Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd. It represented a 28.5-percent premium to the Australian firm's closing price before Fonterra launched its bid in late October.

National Foods is also Australia's biggest milk processor. Its products include milk, yoghurt, gourmet cheese and cream. The board of National Foods unanimously backed San Miguel's offer and recommended that stockholders accept the offer in the absence of a superior proposal.

"The proposal reflects San Miguel's long-term strategic ambition of leveraging its core competencies to expand its presence in non-alcoholic beverages and food in selected countries in the Asia-Pacific region," said Cojuangco.

"National Foods is a good strategic fit for San Miguel, and their management is strongly committed to growing the business. We recognize National Foods' strong growth prospects and believe closer links with our existing Australian and Asian operations will create opportunities for both companies," he added.

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SEC License #2115
OUR 23rd Year
BUY/SELL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB SHARES
As of January 07, 2004

CLUB	SELLING	BUYING
Alabang Country Club "A"		-
Alabang Country Club "B"	1.7M	-
Alta Vista		
Baguio Country Club	850K	please call
Caliraya Spring	350K	
Camp John Hay		170K
Canlubang Golf Club	450K	-
Canyon Woods	125K	-
Capitol Hills "A"	90K net	-
Cebu Country Club		-
Celebrity Sports Club	120K	-
Club Punta Fuego	400K	-
Eagleridge Golf Club "A"	200K	
Eagleridge Golf Club "B"	290K	250K
Eagleridge Golf Club "C"	280K	-
Forest Hills "B"	150K	-
Makati Sports Club	200K	
Mt. Malarayat "B"	please call	250K
Manila Golf Club - Indv.		10M
Manila Polo Club	2.250M net	
Manila Southwoods "A"	-	370K
Manila Southwoods "B"		640K
Manila Yacht Club	290K	
Mimosa-Ind. /C3	please call	140K
Orchard Golf Club "A"	190K	
Orchard Golf Club "B"	-	please call
Orchard Golf Club "C"		340K
Puerto Azul	85K	-
Quezon City Sports Club "B"	145K	
Riviera Golf Club "A"	70K	please call
Riviera Golf Club "B"		100K
Rockwell Leisure Club	280K	-
Royal Tagaytay		-
Sherwood Hills "B"	80K	
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	please call
Spa & Lodge		
Sta. Elena Golf Club "B"		1.5M
Subic Bay Yacht (Corp)		
The Country Club at TH	-	325K
Tagaytay Highlands		750K
Tagaytay Midlands	please call	650K
The Palms Country Club	550K	-
Valley Golf Club	230K	
Wack Wack Golf Club	please call	please call

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GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of January 10, 2005

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,000,000	1,150,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,200,000
Baguio Country Club	500,000	600,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	60,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	70,000
Camp John Hay		200,000
Canlubang	400,000	460,000
Canyon Woods	-	160,000
Capitol Hills	100,000	120,000
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,900,000
Celebrity Sports Club	-	140,000
Club Filipino	100,000	120,000
Eagleridge "A"	-	250,000
Eagleridge "B"	-	300,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	300,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	130,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	200,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	220,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	200,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	220,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	Please Call	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,500,000	-
Manila Polo	2,100,000	2,250,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	430,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	550,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	380,000
Metroclub "A"	110,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	140,000	180,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	-	275,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	-	250,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	300,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	170,000	200,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	350,000
Quezon City Sports Club	145,000	180,000
Rockwell	230,000	300,000
Spa & Lodge	500,000	650,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,200,000	1,400,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,450,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	170,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	380,000	430,000
Tagaytay Highlands	780,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	680,000	780,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	120,000	150,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	-	200,000
Valley Golf	200,000	300,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	6,000,000	-

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Cautious . . .

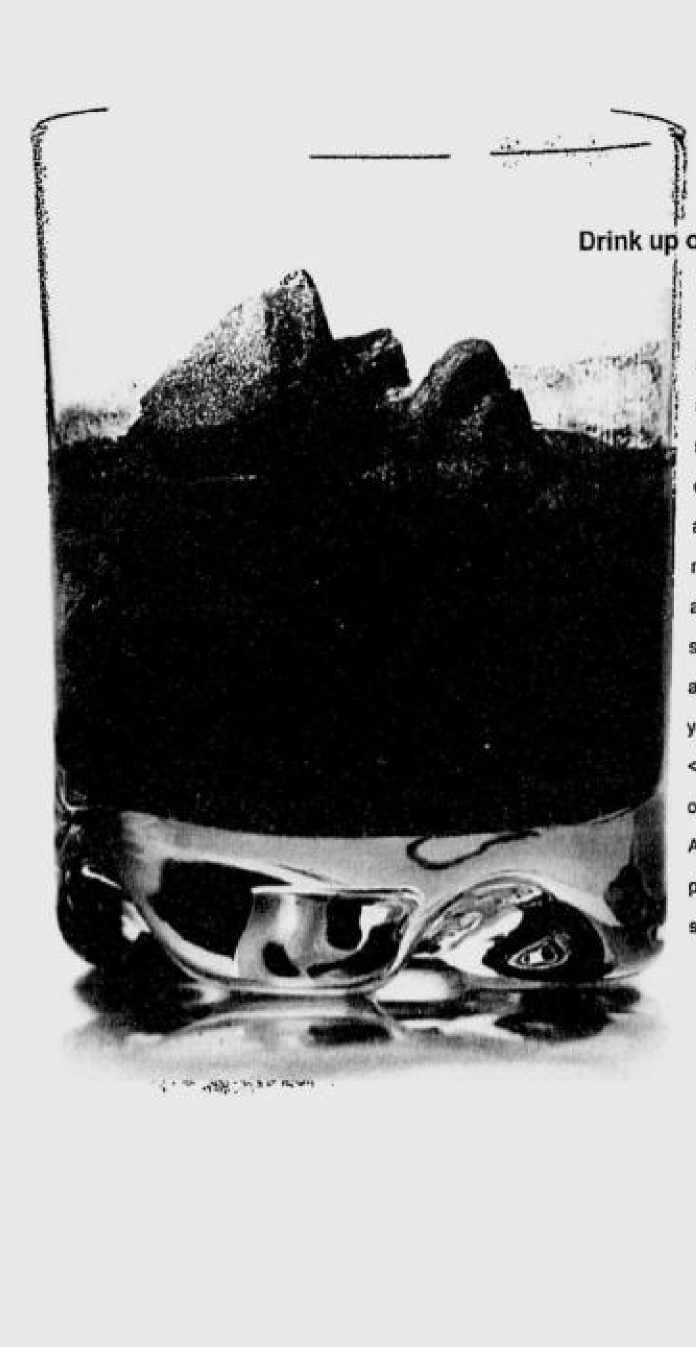
From page B1

climbed to a five-year high, only to succumb to profit-taking by the end of the week.

"However, the profit-taking may be due to rotational buying as we still see interest in select blue chips, second liners and mining issues," BPI Trade said.

Domestic inflation hit a six-year high in December as prices of basic goods accelerated due to the recent typhoons and pressure from high fuel prices. The National Statistics Office reported that year-on-year inflation, based on 1994 prices, climbed to 7.9 percent in December from 7.6 percent in November. For the year 2004, the country's consumer price index rose by an average of 5.5 percent, above the government's 4-5 percent forecast for the year.

"Inflation is expected to rise further, eventually peaking in February this year. With the six-year high inflation rate, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is now under increasing pressure to raise its key interest rates. However, the BSP seems to have recognized that domestic inflation is not being caused by excess money supply but rather by supply bottlenecks. This coupled with the stable peso-dollar exchange rate is giving the BSP some time to stave off a rate hike," Vistan said. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*



Drink up or speak up. Our continued reliance on imported fossil fuels like coal and oil for energy is one of the largest reasons behind problems like global warming, air pollution, the rise in respiratory ailments, and the worsening condition of our water supplies. This dependence also leaves us economically vulnerable to the spiralling cost of coal and oil in the world market. And things will only get murkier unless we reduce our use of coal and oil and push for the increased use of renewable energy sources like geothermal, wind, biomass, hydro, and solar. Speak up and let the government know you want clean energy. Text WWF YES <Your Name> to 2366 for Globe (P2.50/text) or log on to www.powerswitch.org.ph/vote. Act now and help get the Renewable Energy Bill passed into law. Maybe then, the future won't be such a hard thing to swallow.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER WWF

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 7, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27	27.5	26	26	2,926,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53	53.5	53	53	548,000
China Banking Corp.	570	570	570	570	110
Citystate Savings Bank	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	1,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48.5	48	48.5	63,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	60,000
International Exch. Bank	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	210,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	27	26	26.5	1,186,000
Prudential Bank	350	350	350	350	320
Philippine National Bank	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	40,300
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	100
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	24	23.75	24	8,400
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	300,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	108	108	107	108	360
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1825	1825	1810	1810	630
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	18.25	18.25	18	18.25	12,300
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.76	1.8	1.76	1.78	9,584,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	950	950	925	925	41,260
Ipeople Inc	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	138,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	100,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.032	0.034	2,500,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	30,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	10,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.85	3.05	2.85	3.05	39,051,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1355	1365	1345	1345	927,080
Ivantage Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.6	0.6	820,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	71,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	15.75	16	15.75	15.75	53,900
Manila Electric Co. B	25.5	25.5	25	25.5	231,600
Petron Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.15	3.25	5,288,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	10,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	110,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.9	6	5.9	6	3,145,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.38	390,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.36	400,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	110,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	40,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	70,000
Union Cement Corp.	2.46	2.55	2.42	2.5	26,622,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	4,525,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4	4	4	4	4,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	209,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28	27.5	28	233,600
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	210,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	59.5	59.5	59.5	52,900
San Miguel Corp. B	79	79	79	79	155,400
Universal Robina Corp.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	2,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,550,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	7	7	6.9	6.9	7,610,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	20,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.25	8,487,000
Alliance Global Group Inc	11	11	11	11	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.021	0.021	2,200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.54	1.58	1.54	1.58	178,000
APC Group Inc.	0.09	0.095	0.09	0.09	2,900,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.5	191,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	2,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	17	17	16.75	17	21,200
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.13	0.11	0.13	170,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.69	0.71	0.69	0.7	3,900,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.17	6,880,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	700,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.155	0.19	0.155	0.19	44,230,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.75	7,687,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp	5.5	6	5.5	6	5,707,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	31.5	31.5	31	31.5	173,400
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	50,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	4,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	16,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	3.1	3.15	3.1	3.15	214,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.28	2.28	1,556,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.22	1.26	1.22	1.26	1,990,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	530,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.38	35,030,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	60,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	320,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.16	0.17	0.16	0.17	880,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	20,000
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	20,000
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	20,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	17,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	600,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.58	0.59	0.58	0.58	2,770,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.96	1.04	0.96	1.02	3,690,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.52	0.55	0.5	0.53	2,430,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.75	2.8	2.75	2.8	21,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	18	18.25	18	18.25	281,200
Macroasia Corp. Warrants	0.13	0.13	0.0675	0.0675	110,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	5,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	4,206,000
Cityland Development Corp	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	12,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.49	0.49	10,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.26	6,410,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	2,270,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.33	0.34	2,140,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	9,713,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	10,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	300,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	1,620,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	830,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.9	7.9	6,834,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	10,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.014	0.012	0.014	361,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.05	68,000
Benguet Corp. A	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.3	141,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.4	64,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	11,530,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.48	0.48	0.47	0.47	6,040,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	262,300,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	115,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0048	362,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.81	0.82	0.79	0.81	2,030,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.82	0.84	0.82	0.84	4,160,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	400,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	4,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.0055	553,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	222,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	470,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	1,400,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	22,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.044	0.049	0.044	0.049	28,700,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.21	0.235	0.21	0.235	400,000

Cocktales

From page B3

after she had been refused to be conferred with cum laude honors, despite her overall average of 1.729, as against the cum laude minimum of 1.75.

But the UP board, after a series of appeals and reviews, ruled that Morales failed to qualify for the honors since she switched her minor from German to Spanish, thus invalidating the high grades, a perfect 1, she had obtained for two German subjects.

Not counting the German credits, the student's general weighted average sank to 1.76.

Besides, the UP ruled, the "Plan A" curriculum that Morales chose did not allow free electives, which the student had wanted the school to classify her German courses.

The graduate had initially won the suit at the Quezon City Regional Trial Court level, after the court ruled—erroneously, the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court later said—that UP had gravely abused the application of its academic discretion.

Adolf's turnabout

THE MANILA Diamond Hotel had been ordered by the Supreme Court to accept the workers who had struck in 1997, saying a subsequent labor department order that had modified the original return-to-work order into payroll reinstatement had been wrong.

Then Labor Secretary Cresenciano Trajano had issued the return-to-work order, which mandates the hotel to accept the strikers, but acting secretary Jose Español later modified Trajano's order to mere payroll reinstatement in the meantime that his department was adjudicating the labor dispute.

Trajano's modification of his boss' order constituted grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction, ruled the SC First Division, which is chaired by no less than the chief justice, Hilario Davide Jr.

The SC decision was written by Justice Adolfo Azcuna, who, incidentally, was at one point the president of the Manila Hotel, another hotel that also figured in a violent dispersal of striking workers.

Heard through the grapevine

TIP: Norkis, which had lost the Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge dealership to CATS Motors, still has a few unsold units of Durango SUVs, plus an assorted lot of spare parts.

Norkis is still trying to negotiate with Chrysler what to do with the unsold inventory, and the American automobile company just might agree to heavily discount the stock just so as to move them.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

BSP further tightens rules on banks' securities deals

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas further tightened the rules on banks' securities transactions in order to curb undocumented repurchase agreement (repos).

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the policy-making Monetary Board had approved last week a new requirement for banks' top officials to certify every six months that their banks or quasi-banks did not enter into any undocumented repo.

The certification should also vouch that the financial institution had strictly complied with rules on the proper sale of securities to the public and performed the necessary representations and disclosures.

Repos refer to the purchase of securities with the agreement to sell them at a higher price on a specific future date. For the party selling the security and agreeing to repurchase it in the future, it is a repo while for the party buying the security and agreeing to sell in the future, it is a reverse repurchase agreement.

The BSP's earlier requirement was an annual certification, but Buenaventura said a 12-month period was too long a reckoning period.

"Once a year is not enough," Buenaventura said. "If this is still abused, we'll even make it a requirement every three months," he warned.

This developed as monetary authorities earlier expressed concern that under-the-table repos create additional liquidity not being captured in the BSP monitoring, and can thus have a potential impact on foreign exchange trading as well as on overall monetary policy.

Such transactions also become disadvantageous to the investing public, as they are being done on a "no recourse" or no-return-no-exchange basis.

This new requirement, Buenaventura said, would prevent questionable transactions.

The BSP chief estimated that there were about P250 to P300 billion worth of outstanding undocumented repos in the local banking system.

PSBank
Peso TIME DEPOSIT

Deposit Amount (in pesos)	Interest Rates (%) 30 days	60 days	90 days	1 year
100,000 - 499,999	5.750	6.500	6.750	7.250
500,000 - 999,999	6.500	7.250	7.500	7.750
1.0MM - 4,999,999	7.125	7.500	7.750	8.000
5.0MM - 9,999,999	7.250	7.750	8.000	8.250
10 million and up	7.500	8.250	8.250	8.500

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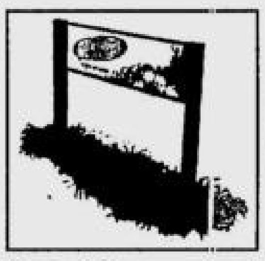

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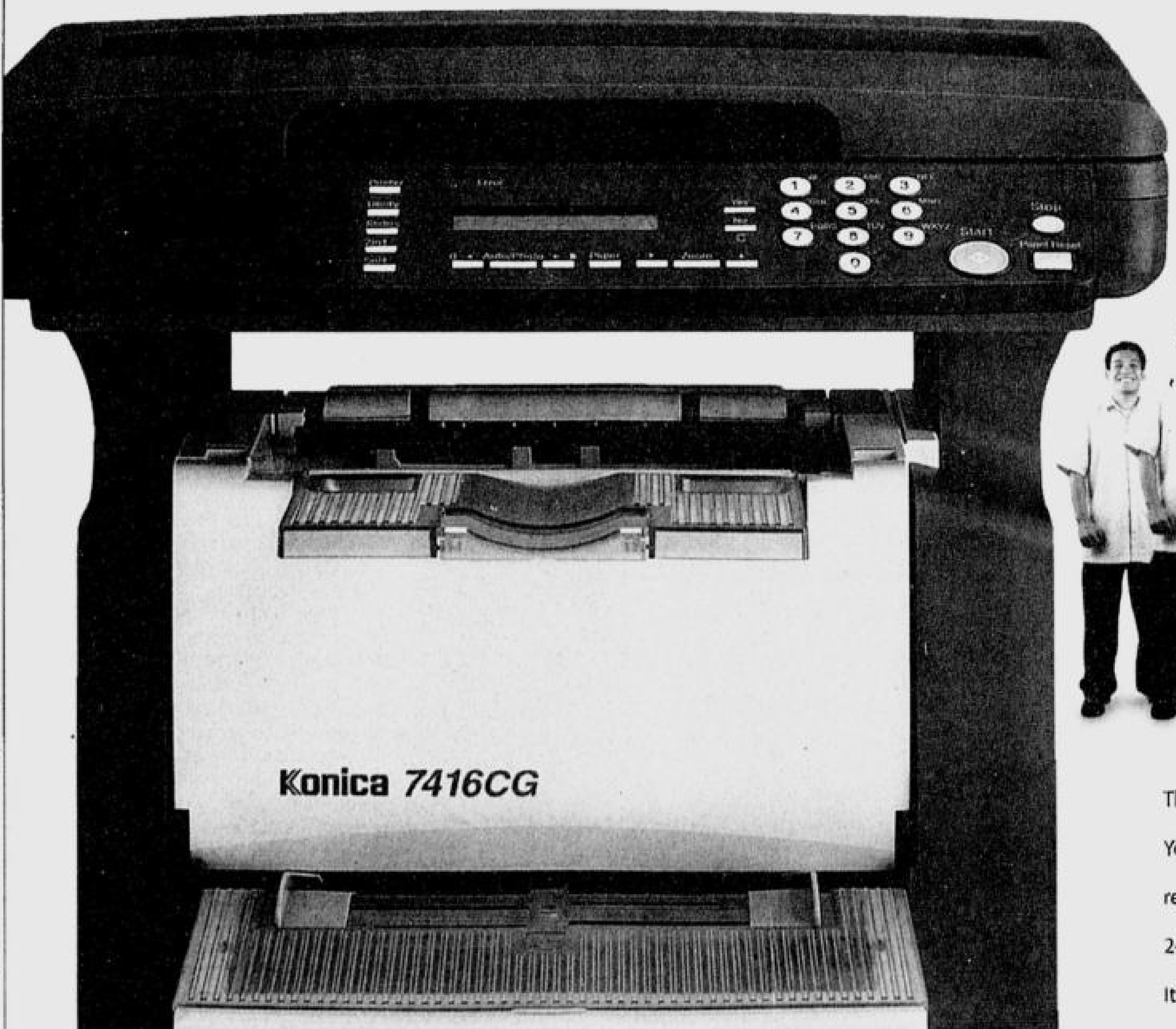

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RP banks brace for tougher rules on loss provisioning

By Doris C. Dumlao

PHILIPPINE banks will have to brace for tighter rules on loss provisioning, which they expect will drag down their profitability.

Alberto Reyes, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas deputy governor for bank supervision and examination, said the BSP was planning to overhaul its regulations on provisioning in line with the shift to International Accounting Standards.

"We have to review the regulations on loan-loss provisions, loan classification and foreclosed assets because, under the IAS, these shall fall under impaired asset valuations," Reyes said.

The BSP official said the tightening of regulations on these items, which would include a more stringent market-to-marking requirement, would impact on the banks' profitability.

At present, banks are required, for instance, to have their property assets appraised by reputable appraisers every two years, Reyes said.

"It looks like this is not being done," he noted. "Under IAS 39 ... they have to comply with this."

IAS 39 deals with the new rules recognition and measurement of financial assets and liabilities, including derivatives on an interest in a subsidiary, associate, or joint venture.

London-based Fitch Ratings, in a recent report, said it was concerned about "lax standards of corporate governance and auditing in the Philippines, which can only serve to further erode confidence in the banks."

For its part, the BSP has required Philippine banks to adopt the IAS and the International Financial Reporting Standards when they submit their 2005 annual financial statements.

Reyes said the requirement, approved by the Monetary Board during its meeting last week, followed the approval by the Accounting Standards Council of the revised IAS and new IFRS.

IAS/IFRS is a set of standards that prescribes how particular types of transaction and other events should be reflected in financial statements.

World Bank does it right

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

IN THE past several months, the World Bank's Manila office has gone around in a series of consultations on their Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for 2006-2008, to gather views from the national and local governments, NGOs, private business sector, academe, labor groups and other stakeholders on how it could best respond to the country's development needs.

To its credit, the World Bank has come a long way from the days when it was often criticized as intent on merely "pushing money" onto developing country debtors regardless of the latter's real need for the projects the multimillion-dollar loans funded.

Ownership and inclusion

Two key words, among others, have set the tone for the work of the World Bank under the leadership of James Wolfensohn since he took over in the early 1990s: ownership and inclusion.

I remember how struck I was to hear him declare in one of his first major speeches that the bank's success was not to be measured by the amount of money its loan officers are able to dispense, but by the smiles that their projects can ultimately put on a child's face.

Having worked twice as a graduate student summer intern at the bank's Washington headquarters more than two decades ago, I knew how significant a change this statement represented. From within, I got the distinct impression then that WB employees got their "brownie points" from the dollar amount of loans that their work could produce. It was this incentive structure that probably led many countries to the "debt trap" that the bank's critics had accused it of having pushed them into.

To our own credit, the Philippines was among the first countries to assert that WB assistance should be determined by our own defined development priorities, as embodied in our Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP).

I remember how my good friend and Neda predecessor Winnie Monsod came on strongly on this point with both WB and IMF, a line consistently followed by all of us who succeeded her. Since then, the bank's CAS has been drawn up not only in close conformity with the MTPDP, but also in a manner that has closely involved both the Philippine government and nongovernment development partners as well.

Systematic framework

What I like about the result of the WB's recent round of consultations is that they have come up with a wholistic strategy that systematically defines: (1) our national development goals; (2) strategic development levers; and, (3) platforms for implementation.

Taking off from the new MTPDP, our overall goals are grouped under two broad headings, namely, pursuit of economic growth and social inclusion.

Under economic growth, the more specific concerns are addressing infrastructure bottlenecks, raising investments in priority sectors, developing the financial market, arresting declining competitiveness, strengthening the labor force, and promoting sustainable natural resource use.

Promoting social inclusion highlights wider access to productive assets and to better education and health, population management, enhancing youth participation, social protection for vulnerable groups, and wider civil society participation in social sector initiatives.

The bank noted the particularly strong clamor to localize economic growth development efforts, and achieve more balanced rural-urban growth. This is motivated by the many success stories and good practices now being achieved at the local level by a growing new breed of development-minded local executives.

The key development levers, or prerequisites, are the attainment of fiscal stability—the subject of so much current discussion—and promotion of good governance, especially by highlighting and replicating "islands of good governance" among local governments.

Providing the implementation platforms to achieve all these requires: (1) strengthening the national government; (2) building LGU capacity; and, (3) increased private sector role in economic development.

The World Bank has then identified specific points within this system wherein it can provide assistance to the country in the most effective manner.

There's nothing like putting people's diverse collective wisdom together to come up with a promising roadmap. If handled well, subsequent assistance from the WB should be instrumental in getting us out of the debt trap, rather than sink us deeper in it.

Globe responds

On another note, my column "Revenue scorecard" (NFL, 12-13-04) provoked a response from Globe Telecom through its president, Gerry Ablaza, who expresses concern that I may have given readers the wrong impression that the telecommunications sector and, specifically, their company has not been contributing adequately to government's tax coffers.

This is after I had indicated that the sector's VAT liabilities to BIR have been negative in recent years—something I had verified directly with the BIR beforehand.

Globe points out that VAT payments made to the Bureau of Customs for their imported telecommunications equipment had amounted to over P7 billion since 2000, but have ended up in a negative VAT position with BIR because this exceeded the VAT payable on their sales.

They assert that their inability to fully utilize their input VAT credits means that they have, in effect, advanced payment of VAT on revenues they have yet to earn or collect. They further point out that they, along with rival PLDT-Smart, are among the top 20 large taxpayers honored by the BIR in 2003.

While insisting that they are not against paying additional taxes to the government, they would rather do so through an increase in the VAT rate to 12 percent, so that everyone would share in the burden.

In fairness, Globe and PLDT have indeed been recognized as leading corporate taxpayers. My point, though, is that in the same way that our tax system pursues vertical equity by requiring higher income individuals to pay higher rates (not just levels) of tax, the same principle of progressive taxation could apply to companies as well. Thus, greater taxation of higher-profit companies can be justified. I will elaborate on this debate in another column.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Mindanaworld

From page B2

seems to be brighter in the new year.

Tourism

Tourism picked up last year, and the Davao City International Airport became the busiest airport in Mindanao and the Zamboanga Baseport was the biggest transport for sea plying passengers. More visitors were enticed to explore and experience Mindanao's natural beauty and wonders now that peace and security is assured, and was quite evident too. Secretary Jesus Dureza, chair of MedCo, reported last week that Mindanao insurgency had substantially declined in 2004, due to the success of the peace talks with the MILF. Aside from the improved peace and order situation, tourists and visitors flocked to Mindanao during the Department of Tourism's two-week promotional activity and campaign dubbed as "WOW Mindanao 2004 Exposition," last Oct. 1-17 which was headed by Tourism Secretary Durano and DOT Davao regional director Sonia Garcia.

Truly, one cannot reminisce on Mindanao 2004 without uttering the word, "wow." Silently building blocks of long-term development, Mindanao is weaving its future as splendid as its *tinalak* and as amazing as its people's varied cultures. And as far as 2004 is concerned, we have definitely reasons to celebrate!

(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for Mindanao's development; a member of the Export Development Council and former chair of the Mindanao Business Council; vice chair of the Mindanao Commission of Women and National Corn Board; chair of the Mindanao TVET Association). Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

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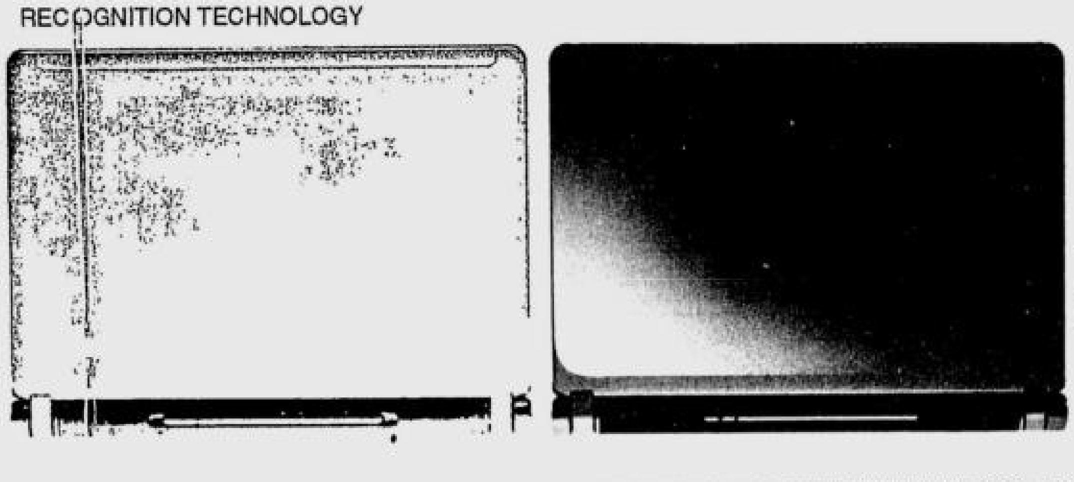

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Losses from banks' asset sale alarm rating firm

By Doris C. Dumlao

LONDON-BASED Fitch Ratings warned that the huge losses tolerated by local banks to attract wholesale buyers of their idle assets might threaten their core capital strength.

In a special report on Philippine banks dated Dec. 30, FitchRatings said the loss rates on a spate of recent asset sales averaged at about 67 percent—representing a 75 percent discount allowed on nonperforming loans (NPLs) and 55 percent on foreclosed properties.

Applying the estimated loss rate on FitchRatings' 13 monitored Philippine banks, the rating agency said the banks' combined equity to assets ratio of 11.2 percent as of mid-2004 would slide to a "barely adequate" 6.1 percent.

These loss rates are seen to cause a substantial weakening of the banks' balance sheet strength as measured by their equity/asset ratios after the asset write-down.

While capital ratios may remain adequate with the deferred recognition of losses allowed by banking regulators, FitchRatings said its calculations were more concerned on the underlying capital position.

It cited the case of Metrobank, Philippine National Bank and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., whose ratios respectively drop to 2.8 percent, negative 2.1 percent and 3.1 percent. These three banks accounted for 25 percent of the banking system's assets.

"The weak state of these banks' balance sheets would not be so much a concern if they were achieving adequate levels of underlying profitability such that they could in time strengthen their balance sheets. Such, however, is not the case," the report said.

The loss rates that the banks ultimately incur on their NPAs depend on the value of both their foreclosed properties as well as those held as collateral for their remaining NPLs.

"For years now, the banks have claimed that these properties are conservatively valued in their books. This, however, has raised the obvious question of why they do not simply sell the properties, the logical answer being that the properties were in fact overvalued in their books and would result in losses if the banks did in fact sell them," the report said.

NCCP wrong on mining law-Part 2

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

SHARON Ruiz-Duremdez, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, was frothing at the mouth when she wrote a rejoinder to my column of last Dec. 20.

She was all wet. She said, "Mining, per se, is not the issue…it is the opening up of our resources to wanton plunder by profit-hungry companies that the NCCP is against." Then, the NCCP should see to it that the Mining Act and the implementing rules be strictly enforced.

She said, "Liberalization of the mining industry, as envisioned in the mining act, will never generate the necessary income to ease the financial crisis … for as long as foreign companies repatriate all profits, equipment and investment to their parent companies … (and) given 10-year tax holidays, duty-free importation." These are barefaced lies, and the Supreme Court decision backs me up.

I am now absolutely sure that Ruiz-Duremdes is a lousy hardcore communist. Her attitude towards profits is a dead giveaway. Old-line communist dogma decreed that business should not be for profit. But Russia and China have shifted to market economies, which means a lot of people there are reaping huge profits. By the way, I bet the annual financial statement of NCCP shows a hefty profit.

She said, "…foreign companies are allowed to sell gold directly to the international market without intervention from the Bangko Sentral." Wrong again. Bangko Sentral buys all the gold production of the country.

She complains that companies are granted 25-year mining leases renewable for another 25 years. Large-scale mining is a very expensive enterprise. I know a company that will drill four exploratory holes next April. That will cost $1 million. If the results are good, more holes will be drilled at a cost of $10 million. If all goes well, the mine will be operational in five years, after spending about $500 million. With that kind of money, is a 25-year grant, renewable for another 25 years too much? Besides, the actual length of the operations depends on how long the ore will last.

She complains that the mining act was not able to prevent the accidents that have occurred in the past years. Mining is inherently dangerous. When you dig a big hole deep into the earth, you never know what forces you might unleash. When you use dynamite to blast hard rock you can never avoid an occasional accident.

Should mining be banned because of the accidents? Of course not. When Ralph Nader proved that American cars were unsafe at any speed, he did not call for the shutting down of the automotive industry. He called for safer cars. This is why the car of Ruiz-Duremdez has seat belts.

If you have a $500-million mining facility, you hire the best mining engineers to manage the inherent risks. Otherwise, you may not be able to buy insurance for the mine. Will you risk so much money on a venture that cannot be insured?

Ruiz-Duremdes complains about the environmental damage wrought by open-pit mining. Sometimes, the ore body lies near the surface. It is cheaper to bulldoze the so-called overburden to get to the ore. This is open-pit mining. The law requires that after the ore runs out, the area should be restored to its original condition, including the greenery. She says this is impossible. How can she say this? Is she an engineer?

She complains about the displacement of the indigenous people. The law requires that the indigenous people should give their "informed consent." If this consent is not given, the investor moves somewhere else. Besides, the Supreme Court says that the mineral resources are owned by the entire Filipino people, not by just a few.

Why has Ruiz-Duremdes not complained against small-scale miners? They are unsupervised and uncontrolled. They employ no mining engineers. They pollute the rivers and streams. They waste our mineral resources because they recover only about 40 percent of the gold, compared to 90 percent in large-scale mining.

I know why. Like all lousy communists, Ruiz-Duremdes hates large-scale miners because they do not pay the CPP-NPA the 10 percent revolutionary tax. On the other hand, the small-scale miners cannot stand up to the CPP-NPA and they pay the tax, however grudgingly.

Lousy communists like Ruiz-Duremdes do not really care about the poor and the environment. All the lousy communists want is their 10-percent share.

I can forgive Ruiz-Duremdes for her obstinate ignorance. But it is not for me to forgive her for being downright un-Christian.

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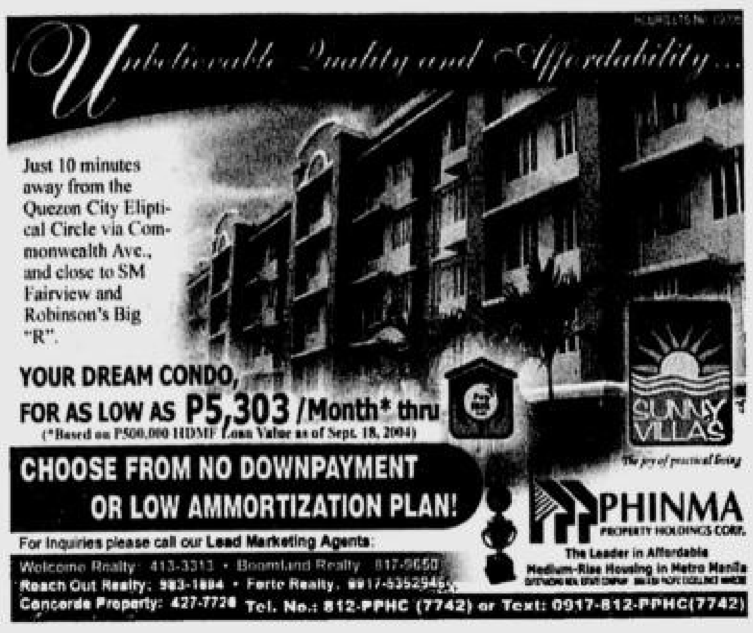
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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late NONILON S. TRAJANO under Doc 145, Page 29, Book II Series of 2004 of Notary Public Atty Godofredo T. Liban of Quezon City, has been extrajudicially settled with waiver of renunciation of rights among his heirs as per Doc. No. 4246, Series of 1999 Service No. 4246 OR. 810 and authenticated by Consul General Generoso G. Calonge, Washington, D.C.
(PDI-Dec 27, Jan 3 & 9, 2005)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late SIMPLICIO T. SANTOS and FELICISIMA A. SANTOS has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc.#370; Page#73; Book#111; Series of 2004 before notary public Atty. Alan R. Bulawan of Manila
PDI-January 10, 17 & 24, 2005

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that LETTY M. MAGLACION has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from LETECIA to LETTY. In the Certificate of Live Birth of LETECIA DACULOS MONCADA who was born on June 20, 1962 at MALUKO, BUKIDNON and whose parents are GUILLERMO L. MONCADA and SATURNINA BA-A DACULOS.

Any person adversely affetced by said petition may file his written opposition within this office not later than January 10, 2005.

(Sgd) Norma S. Diputado
City Civil Registrar

(PDI-January 4&10, 2005)

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VILLAMOR GOLF CLUB (VGC)

INVITATION TO BID

The renovation of male and female locker rooms of Villamor Golf Club is offered for public bidding. The project includes civil works, fabrication of lockers, plumbing, electrical and water heater system.

Interested parties are invited to attend the Pre Bid Conference on 14 Jan. 2005 (Friday) at 2 p.m. to secure project details at VGC Board Room Villamor Airbase, Pasay City.

Bids will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of the bidders and interested club members on 28 Jan. 2005 (Friday) at 3 p.m. at the VGC Board Room.

For more information, please call 8534977 (GM's office).

(PDI–Jan. 5 & 10, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 010-2005
03 January 2005

SUBJECT : Initial Registration Scheme for Brand New Motor Vehicles Valid for Three (3) Years

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 4 (d) [1], Article III, Chapter 1 of Republic Act No. 4136, as amended, the Assistant Secretary, with the approval of the Secretary of Transportation and Communications, shall have the power to issue rules and regulations prescribing the procedure for the registration of motor vehicles; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 5 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 74, all motor vehicles and trailers of any type used or operated on or upon any highway of the Philippines *"shall be registered with the Bureau of Land Transportation* (now the LTO or Land Transportation Office) *for the current year, and that the dates of annual registration of motor vehicles shall be based on a registration scheme to be prepared by the Bureau of Land Transportation* (now the LTO) *subject to the approval of the Minister* (now the Secretary) *of Transportation and Communications."*

NOW, THEREFORE, and in pursuance thereto, it is hereby ordered that the initial registration of all brand new motor vehicles, as defined herein, shall be valid and effective for three (3) years from its first registration. Such initial registration shall require the Certificate of Conformity (COC), issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Compulsory Third Party Liability insurance policy valid for three (3) years.

1.0. **Coverage.**
  1.1 Brand new motor vehicles (MVs) – refer to new and unregistered motor vehicles manufactured, assembled, imported, distributed and/or sold by corporations or companies accredited by or member/s of the following, to wit.
    a. CAMPI – Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc.
    b. TMA – Truck Manufacturers Association;
    c. MDPPA – Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association.
  1.2. Brand new motor vehicles imported by other LTO accredited entities
  1.3. These exclude backyard – assembled and imported used motor vehicles
  1.4. Motorcycles will engine displacement of 200 cc and below are likewise excluded in this Order.
2.0 **Registration Rate** – The rates of the Motor Vehicle User's Charge as set forth and imposed under Republic Act No. 8794 shall be collected from the owner of the covered motor vehicles for the registration of the said units.
3.0. **Apprehension/s.**
  3.1. Should the covered motor vehicle be apprehended within the period of its initial three-year registration for violation/s attributable to the motor vehicle, e.g. smoke belching or non-roadworthiness, the motor vehicle shall still be required to undergo the accessory penalty or penalties of passing the Motor Vehicle Inspection and/or Emission Tests.
4.0. **Repealing Clause.**
  4.1. Any memoranda or orders thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Administrative Order are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.
5.0. **Effectivity.**
  5.1. This Order shall take effect ninety (90) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines or filing of three (3) copies thereof with the University of the Philippines Law Center.

ANNELI R. LONTOC
Assistant Secretary

Approved:

LEANDRO R. MENDOZA
Secretary, Department of Transportation and Communications

EMILIA T. BONCODIN
Secretary
Department of Budget & Management

JUANITA D. AMATONG
Secretary
Department of Finance

(PDI - January 10, 2005)

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that God raised
the Lord Jesus
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raise us to life
with Jesus.
He will present us,
along with you,
to God."
2 Corinthians 4:14

ORLANDO "ORLY" Q. PUNZALAN

August 5, 1934 – January 7, 2005

His bereaved family, wife Pilar;
Children **Princess & Jay**
Paolo, Jenifer – Nathan, Janina & Ryan
Meg
Reuben
Lotus
Mother, **Antonia Punzalan**

Brothers, Sisters and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel Q, Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, January 12, 2005 at the Manila Memorial Park, Paranaque City after the 9:00 am Mass at the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe Nuevo, Makati City.

In lieu of flowers, donations would be highly appreciated.

SIXTA M. MAGPANTAY

Peacefully joined her Creator on January 08, 2005 at the age of 92.

Her loving children **Tacio** & **Meding**; **Lita** & **Nestor**; grandchildren **Edith**, **Edna**, **Ric**, **Ethel**, **Alvin** and **Aldrin**, relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal happiness in heaven.

Her remains lie in state at the Royal Chapel, Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on January 12, 2005 at Himlayang Tanauan, Tanauan City, Batangas, after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at St. John Evangelist Catholic Church, Tanauan City, Batangas.

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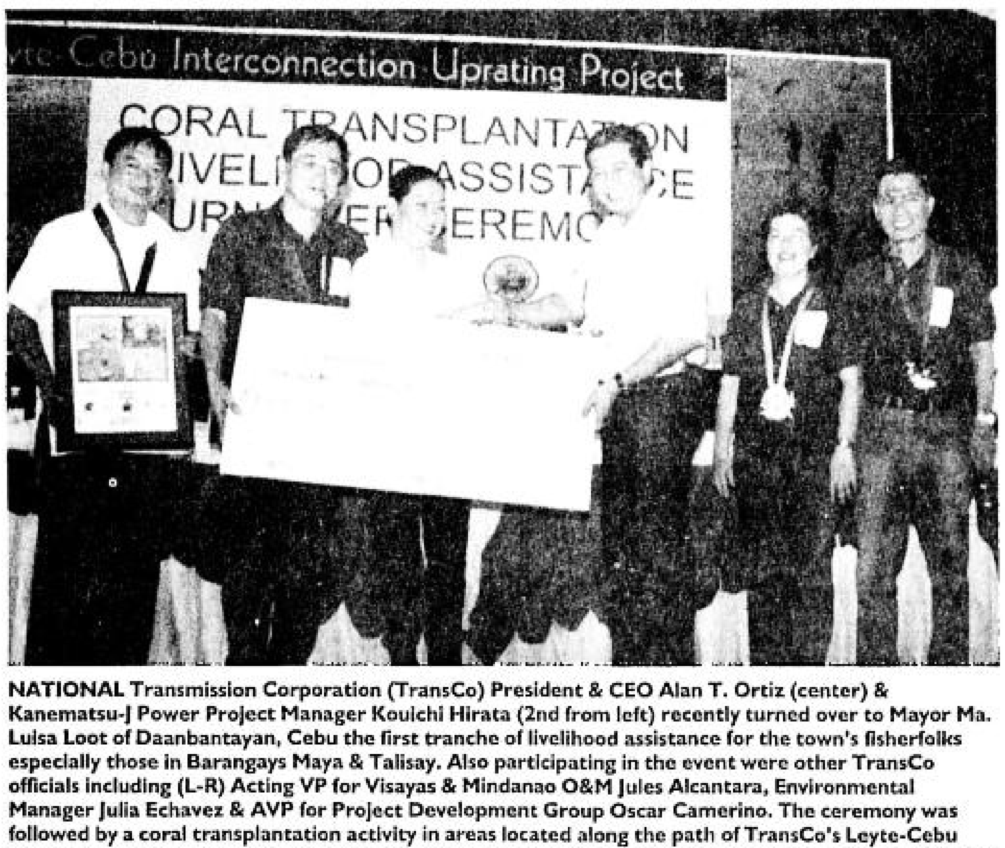

NATIONAL Transmission Corporation (TransCo) President & CEO Alan T. Ortiz (center) & Kanematsu-J Power Project Manager Kouichi Hirata (2nd from left) recently turned over to Mayor Ma. Luisa Loot of Daanbantayan, Cebu the first tranche of livelihood assistance for the town's fisherfolks especially those in Barangays Maya & Talisay. Also participating in the event were other TransCo officials including (L-R) Acting VP for Visayas & Mindanao O&M Jules Alcantara, Environmental Manager Julia Echavez & AVP for Project Development Group Oscar Camerino. The ceremony was followed by a coral transplantation activity in areas located along the path of TransCo's Leyte-Cebu Interconnection Uprating Project (LCIUP). The project entails the installation of some 32 kilometers of submarine cable from Tongonan, Leyte to Brgy. Talisay in Daanbantayan. Slated for completion in September 2005, the uprating project will effectively double the LCIUP's capacity to 400MW and bring much needed power supply to the island of Cebu.

SHOWING their strong sense of corporate social responsibility, government agencies and private companies aligned with the Department of Energy were the first business group to band together to extend financial assistance and logistical support to victims of recent typhoons which heavily hit the provinces of Quezon and Aurora. The energy agencies extended their assistance to the DSWD through the Corporate Network for Disaster Response, a respected NGO that partners with government to swiftly aid in disaster relief and response operations. State firm National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), for its part, donated P1 million for the typhoon victims on top of relief goods donated by its employees. Led by Energy Secretary Vincent S. Perez, Jr. (2nd from left), energy family officials including TransCo President & CEO Alan T. Ortiz (far right) came to Camp Aguinaldo for the formal turnover of the relief goods to DSWD Secretary Dinky Soliman & Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz (center).

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Citibank employees come to aid of typhoon victims

THIS year, the season of giving took a deeper meaning for employees of Citibank Philippines who found a different way to celebrate Christmas.

The tragedy that struck the Eastern part of Luzon in early December, due to four successive major typhoons "Unding", "Violeta", "Winnie" and "Yoyong", resulted in thousands of casualties, millions left homeless and some one billion pesos lost in crops and livestock. As the media carried news of hungry and cold typhoon victims, of the dead that can no longer be given a proper burial, of the potential outbreak of infectious diseases, and a government with little resources to help, it was clearly a time for civic action.

"Personally, those images affected me so much I knew I had to do something. However, I was surprised to find out that every person I spoke to felt the same thing and so it became clear that we as a corporate family can do something more significant to help the typhoon victims," recalled Nina Aguas, Citibank's country business manager for global consumer group in the country.

And help they did. Citibank launched a bank-wide fundraising campaign that tapped into the creativity of its officers and staff – with activities such as used clothing sale, to food sale, to cash contributions, to some departments dipping into their Christmas party funds.

Citigroup corporate country officer James Hunt kicked off the fund drive with a personal donation, and a plea for all employees to follow suit.

"To begin with, it's not as if we had a lot of money for the Christmas party. Traditionally, our parties are more of a thanksgiving and get-together for everyone than the lavish affairs that others have. And so dipping into the fund meant no party for some departments, or a modest one for the others. But you won't hear of any complaints – for how can you celebrate Christmas when you see so much suffering in the countryside?" related Alma Horn, Citibank's human resources director.

The fund raising activities also provided Citibank employees the opportunity to come together in the holiday season. "We were pleased to see a lot of inter-department interaction, and people who haven't seen each other for some time because they are assigned to different locations were "reunited". And typical of Citibank, even a fundraising became an occasion to have fun as we sorted clothes for the sale (some donated designer outfits and clothes that were never worn) and tasted all the food offered for sale," said Pinky Martelino, Citibank's voice of employee manager.

Citibank, the largest foreign bank in the country, employs some 1,800 officers and staff for its Corporate and Investment Banking, Consumer Banking, Private Banking and Investment Research operations in the country. And while it is a US-based institution, a majority of its employees are Filipinos, as Citibank is a proud proponent of diversity and promotes local hiring in all the countries where it operates.

And it is these local employees, together with their foreign colleagues, that put together a series of events for 10 days, from Dec. 6 to 15, to raise funds for the typhoon victims. One department chose to commit a portion of their incentives pay to the fund; another decided among themselves to forego gift-giving and make cash donations instead; a group that won in a Christmas party competition donated half of their cash prize; and there was one that initiated a "light-a-tree" campaign to solicit P50 for every light from the employees. Citibank's employees union also gave from their fund a P25,000 donation.

The bank also set up an account where people who wish to make anonymous donations can contribute and the amount grew quickly over the next days as the officers and staff charitably shared from their own savings.

"We set out with no particular target amount to raise but some were hoping we could give at least P100,000. To our surprise, ten days later we raised P500,000, and donations are still coming in. It was so heartwarming, not only because we know the funds will go to a good cause, but to me personally, I was so grateful to be blessed with such a generous team of officers and staff," Aguas added.

Last Dec. 17, Aguas together with Citigroup corporate affairs head Lillibeth Fajardo and Citibank marketing director Cecille Fonacier turned over a check for P500,000 to Philippine Daily Inquirer's president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez for appropriation to typhoon victims. Philippine Daily Inquirer chose as beneficiary for the donation the Sagip-Buhay Foundation represented by Fr. Francis Lucas.

In appreciation of Citibank's generosity, Fr. Lucas officiated one of the bank's Simbang Gabi masses that delivered a Christmas message – one that has been clearly heard and responded to by Citibank employees.

PDI PHOTO/ROMY HOMILLADA

CITIBANK'S country business manager for global consumer group Nina Aguas (center) turns over a check for P500,000 to Fr. Francis Lucas of Operation Sagip Buhay to aid the typhoon victims in Eastern Luzon. The donation was made and raised by employees of Citibank in the Philippines and presented to Philippine Daily Inquirer president Sandy Prieto Romualdez (2nd from right) for appropriation. Others in photo are: (from left) Citigroup corporate affairs head Lillibeth Fajardo, Institute for Disaster Risk Management director for international operations Sanny Jegillos, and Citibank marketing director Cecille Fonacier.

AYALA CORP P5 BILLION BOND ISSUE

Ayala Corp signed an underwriting agreement with a syndicate of local and foreign banks for a P5 billion bond issue. Shown signing the agreement are (seated from left): Manuel Salak, country manager (ING); Eduardo Francisco, SVP (BDO Capital); Ramon Opulencia, senior assistant treasurer (AC); Francisco Sebastian, president (FMIC); Delfin Lazaro, treasurer and CFO (AC); Natividad Alejo, president (BPI Capital); Aster Sotto, president (PCI Capital) and Simon Morris, country head (SCB). Standing (from left) are: Eleanor Hilado, FVP (PCI Capital), Socorro Valdes, VP (ING), Denis Sta. Catalina, VP (BPI Capital); Michelangelo Aguilar, head, client relationships (SCB); Jerome Guevarra, vice president (BDO Capital); Alex Macapagal, AVP (Landbank) and Jose Marcelo, SVP (FMIC).

BDO Alba Romeo & Co now PCAOB-registered, BSP accredited

BDO Alba Romeo & Co Certified Public Accountants' applications for registration with the US-based Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) and accreditation with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) have been approved recently. This was announced by Romeo C. Alba, chair and managing partner of BDO Alba Romeo & Co.

PCAOB is a private sector, non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C. created by the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to oversee the auditors of public companies in order to protect the interests of investors and further the public interest in the preparation of informative, fair and independent audit reports. Registration with the PCAOB allows non-US public accounting firms to prepare or issue audit reports on US public companies, or to play a substantial role in the preparation or issuance of such reports.

The BSP accreditation allows BDO Alba Romeo & Co along with other selected external auditors to audit banks, quasi-banks and trust entities pursuant to the general requirements of BSP Circular No. 410 dated October 29, 2003.

Alba Romeo & Co is affiliated with BDO Global Coordination B.V., one of the leading auditing and consulting organizations with a global network represented in 99 countries and with close to 600 offices worldwide.

LG SERVICE CENTER BAGS AWARD

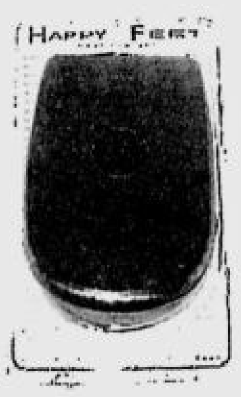
Digital leader LG Electronics was given the recognition of being the Top Electronics Service Center at the Annual National Consumers Quality and People's Choice Award. To further prove that customer satisfaction is their top concern, LG launched its 'LG Text Service Campaign' to allow customers to conveniently send their request via SMS. Customers simply have to type in their service request details and send it to 0917-8242525 for Globe subscribers and 0920-9002525 for Smart subscribers. Photo shows (2nd from left) LG officers Ray Albano, planning supervisor; and (3rd from left) Korean officer of LG Sung Il Chun, customer service and quality officer as they receive their plaque during the awarding ceremonies held at the AFP Theater.

PLDT, ADVENT SERVICE AGREEMENT

PLDT recently signed an international telecommunications service agreement with Advent Inc, a telecommunications carrier in Japan, which is wholly owned by IPS Inc. The agreement includes the interconnection of one synchronous transport module level 1 in the Asia Pacific Cable Network 2 to realize wholesale voice termination and International Private Leased Circuits (IPLC) business with PLDT. Signing the agreement are (seated from left): Koji Miyashita, president and CEO of IPS and Ramon P. Obias, VP, International Carrier Business. Witnessing the signing are (standing from left): Ed Opulencia, manager, carrier relations of Advent Inc; PLDT's Athena O. M. Valerio, country executive, correspondent relations 2 and Denis M. Elazegui, senior manager, correspondent relations 2.

ProductFILES

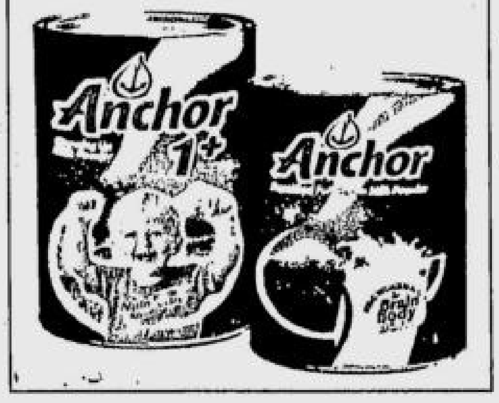
Happy Feet Gel Heel Cups



HAPPY Feet now expands its mission for healthier, happier feet with its Happy Feet Heel Cup made from lightweight polymer gel which cradles the heel to provide comfort, stability, and support. Happy Feet Heel Cups absorb shock and is flexible enough to be used in all types of shoes from formal to active wear. Available at all Toby's Sports and Hobbies Stores.

New face of Anchor Milk

ANCHOR, the milk brand most parents trust, now comes in new packaging designs. Anchor Full Cream Milk Powder and Anchor 1+ with Nutri-Care presents a refreshing new look this year. It features a more distinctive pack design that highlights both the goodness of milk that comes from New Zealand and the flavor variants. This is also aimed towards having one look across the globe. In your favorite stores, it is all about having a strong presence - a strong blue packaging that is recognizably Anchor. Anchor Full Cream Milk Powder is a fortified milk for the brain, body, and bones. Anchor 1+ with Nutri-care is especially for children aged 1-4. It is the world's only vitamin and mineral enriched fortified growing up milk powder proven by doctors to protect children from common childhood diseases and help improve their growth.



Text to
note to the
pay

SUPPORT ONGOING RED CROSS EFFORTS BY DONATING THROUGH TEXT

Apart from being a communication and entertainment tool, your mobile phone now enables you to help fellow Filipinos in need. Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers can support the humanitarian efforts of the Philippine National Red Cross by sending in donations through text. Your support will go a long way in sustaining much-needed projects such as disaster relief and rehabilitation, blood donation drives, and barangay-based disaster preparedness training programs. Proceeds from the Txt2Donate fund drive are now being used to aid typhoon victims in the towns of Infanta, Real, and Gen. Nakar in Quezon. Red Cross officials expressed their thanks to all Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers who responded swiftly and positively to the call for donations, and said that this initiative will definitely continue to enable them to extend assistance to more people. Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers can donate to the Red Cross in denominations of P5, P25, P50, P100, or P300 simply by sending RED <space> <amount> to 2899. The amount will be deducted from the donor's prepaid balance or charged to the next monthly billing statement. You can also make G-Cash contributions in any amount by texting <amount> <space> <MPIN> to 2889178REDCRS or 288291733277. Photo shows Senator Richard Gordon, Chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, receiving the P1.3M check for the donations to the typhoon victims from Ferdz dela Cruz, Globe Telecom's head of wireless business. With them are (from left): Red Cross Secretary General Victor Llozo; Eugene Enriquez, CEO of Paysetter International; and Gwen Pang, Director of the Red Cross' Fund Generation Department.

CHARMEE MALL TOUR WITH SARAH GERONIMO, BEA ALONZO

Sarah Geronimo and Bea Alonzo , Charmee's product endorsers will be touring the Philippines as they promote Charmee feminine protection in the '2005 Charmee Mall Tour'. Catch Sarah in her following Charmee mall tour schedules: Jan. 9 at Ever Commonwealth and on Feb. 4 at Gaisano Iloilo. Likewise, catch Bea in her following Charmee mall tour schedules: Jan 15. at Gaisano Metro Ayala (Cebu) and Feb. 5 at Gaisano Davao. The show is open to mall shoppers who can present a proof of purchase (receipt) on the day of the mall tour of any variant of 1 pack Charmee Feminine Pads plus 1 pack of Charmee Pantyliners . This will serve as their entry pass/ticket into the entertainment area. The event shall be highlighted with a special show featuring their Charmeeing princesses Sarah Geronimo and Bea Alonzo. Aside from entertaining mall goers, freebies await Charmee users.

MMFF premieres at SM, Podium

JUST as it was a festival of films, the recent Metro Manila Film Festival was also a star fest as some of the country's hottest screen celebrities dazzled at the premieres of their films at the SM Megamall and Podium cinemas.

All six movie entries had their respective advance screenings at these cinemas, and fans had a chance to meet not only their favorite stars, but also political figures such as former President Corazon Aquino, Senator Ralph Recto, and former Senator Loren Legarda.

The premiere of "Mano Po 3, My Love" was attended by no less than the "star of all seasons" now Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos, Christopher de Leon, and Boots Anson Roa. Young stars Karylle, John Pratts, Patrick Garcia, Carlo Aquino and Angelica Panganiban also added glitter to the event, which was also attended by Senator Ralph Recto and Loren Legarda.

'PANAGHOY-Sa Suba' actor/director Cesar Montano

The "So Happy Together" advance screening, on the other hand, was truly a happy event as it was topbilled by Kris Aquino, Eric Quizon, Jay-R, Paolo Paraiso and Mark Herras. Former President Corazon Aquino was there to support Kris, as was Mother Lily Monteverde, the movie's producer.

Cesar Montano and Juliana Palermo made fans swoon during the premiere of the Visayan movie "Panaghoy sa Suba", while the cast of "Aishite Imasu" led by Raymart Santiago, Angelu de Leon, Jay Manalo and Dennis Trillo attended a full-house premiere.

Mallers were similarly thrilled at the advance screenings of the thriller entries of the film fest. These included premiers of the ouija board-based "Spirit of the Glass" with the stellar cast of Dingdong Dantes, Rica Peralejo, Marvin Agustin, Paolo Contis, Alessandra de Rossi, Jake Cuenca, and Jay Aquitana, as well as that of the thriller "Sigaw" with teen idols Richard Gutierrez, Angel Locsin, James Blanco and Iza Calzado.

THE POWERHOUSE cast of 'Mano Po 3, My Love' led by Vilma Santos and Christopher de Leon with Patrick Garcia, John Pratts, Carlo Aquino, Karylle and Angelica Panganiban.

There was fun and laughter during the advance screenings of the comedy entries. The premiere of "Enteng Kabisote" saw the cast in full force, including Vic Sotto, Kristine Hermosa, Oyo Boy Sotto, Bing Loyzaga, G Tongi, Epi Quizon, Michael V., Ruby Rodriguez, Leila Kuzma, Aiza Seguerra, and Nadine Samonte. Mars Ravelo's "Lastikman", on the other hand, had rising stars Mark Bautista and Sarah Geronimo together with Vanna Garcia and Danilo Barrios at the premiere.

Fans all over the country also ha a chance to get a glimpse of their favorite stars during the MMFF premieres held at the cinemas of the SM malls in Baguio, Lucena, Davao, and Cebu.

The Metro Manila Film Festival, which opened Dec. 25 at all SM cinemas, is one of the exciting projects of the SM Cinema group.

'X-tra ordinary present' for new year

OVER the years, the Filipino people's awareness on mature and adult topics has grown. This was brought by their exposure to various media and culture that openly discuss these subjects.

Though largely influenced by Western thoughts, ideals and beliefs, Filipinos remain traditional. This is especially true in their perspective on sexuality - and everything that stems from it. Because of our conservative upbringing, discussions about sexual interaction are whispered or hushed. Open discussion of the subject will bring about shame or invite people to question one's moral standards. Thus despite some people's sexual incapacities and difficulties, they would rather not talk about them and silently suffer.

It is this difficulty or shame to express their emotions that strains relationships. This problem also causes some people's confidence to plunge.

Xgadgets seeks to provide relationship and personality enhancers to the Filipino community. Xgadgets takes the conservative upbringing of the Filipinos as a challenge as it aims to reach out to the local market. The company aims to make the people feel at ease, secure and confident about themselves and their relationships.

Xgadgets shows it values the feeling of its clients as it guarantees the confidentiality of every transaction: The merchandise is wrapped in a package that conceals the nature of the content. Transactions also come with a personalized service. The company provides one-on-one consultations to ensure that clients get the right products for their needs.

Other than to improve their relationships, clients of Xgadgets buy their products for other purposes such as for gifts for laughs, for medical purposes and for other personal uses.

By paying cash for the merchandise and the courier through a regional bank, clients from different regions would receive the package the next day. But Metro Manila clients get the package within one hour after the confirmation of the order.

For inquiries, call 374-8832 or 0922-8555515 or log on to www.xgadgets.com.ph.

PROUD PARENTS

Macario Gaw Jr and Karen Gaw are proud parents of Katrina Monica Chen Gaw (center), author of the book 'Music of My Mind' recently launched at the Lounge of The Podium. With the Gaws are Andrew Tan, chair of Megaworld Corp and Ric V. Lim (right), PR consultant.

Sudden death: a lingering threat for heart patients

FOR HEART patients, the biggest fear is to have a heart attack or stroke and to die suddenly from it before reaching the hospital. In many instances, this can happen anytime, even without warning, particularly in diabetic patients who are notorious for having "silent" heart attacks.

Previous heart attack victims have a risk of sudden death, which is four to six times the rate of the general population. The females are not necessarily the stronger sex in relation to sudden death. At older ages, women who have heart attacks are twice as likely as men to die from them within a few weeks.

To prevent sudden cardiac death, one must treat the underlying problems, i.e. coronary artery disease, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, diabetes, smoking and other risk factors.

Over the last 10 years, there is now convincing scientific data showing that omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids in fish oil may have a significant clinical application in the prevention of sudden cardiac death. The American Heart Association (AHA) has now endorsed omega-3 in the prevention of heart attack, stroke and sudden cardiac death.

This was announced during one of the AHA conventions attended by more than 25,000 heart specialists worldwide. A comprehensive evidence-based position statement accompanied the announcement.

It has been suggested that the decreased death associated with fish intake may be in part due to a reduction by omega-3 fatty acids of fatal arrhythmias or irregular heartbeat leading to cardiac arrest.

An association between omega-3 fatty acid intake and cardiac arrest has been reported in humans. A red blood cell membrane omega-3 fatty acid level of five percent was associated with a 70-percent reduction in primary cardiac arrest.

Several other clinical trials, including the highly acclaimed Gissi Prevenzione Trial published in the prestigious Lancet medical journal, have shown a consistent effect of omega-3 in reducing the incidence of sudden cardiac death. In the same trial, no significant cardiovascular benefits have been reported with vitamin E.

Aside from its antiarrhythmic effects, the other beneficial effects of omega-3 are: decrease in thrombosis (blood clot formation), which can lead to heart attack and stroke; decrease in triglyceride levels; decrease in growth rate of atherosclerotic plaque; improvement in the overall health of arteries; and slight decrease in blood pressure.

Various well-designed clinical trials have shown that omega-3 fatty acids reduce cardiovascular disease incidence. Scientific data from prevention studies suggest that taking omega-3 (either as fatty fish or softgel supplements) significantly reduces deaths from heart disease and all causes.

Randomized clinical trials (RCTs) have shown that omega-3 fatty acid supplements can reduce cardiovascular events (death, non-fatal heart attacks, non-fatal strokes). They can also slow the progression of atherosclerosis or the narrowing of the arteries in coronary patients.

There is also now abundant literature that omega-3 helps improve overall health and energy level. Aside from its beneficial effect on heart disease, there are scientific data suggesting that it can also help prevent cancer, depression, Alzheimer's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, ulcerative colitis, Raynaud's disease and a host of other diseases.

Increasing omega-3 fatty acid intake through foods is preferable. However, patients with coronary artery disease may not be able to get enough omega-3 (about 1 gram per day) by diet alone. These people may discuss with their doctor about taking a supplement to reduce their risk of coronary heart disease. Supplements also could help people with high triglycerides and need even larger doses (2-4 grams per day).

A locally available brand of omega-3 supplement is Omegabloc, which is an over-the-counter food supplement in most Mercury Drug and Watson drug stores nationwide.

It comes in 1-gram softgels and is recommended at a dose of 2-3 softgel capsules daily. It is manufactured by NOW International, one of the leading manufacturers of food supplements in the United States.

CAA PATHFINDER CLUB

Members of the CAA Pathfinder Club of the Seventh Day Adventists recently held a 'Dinner for a Cause' Dec. 18 to raise funds for the Pathfinder Club Worship Hall and the purchase of sports equipment for its sports activities. Shown are members, first row, Raquel Ramos (president), Carmela San Diego, Apple Fornoles (core group member), Carren Lucion (core group member), Hannah Nercua, Maria May Sosmeña (sergeant-at-arms), and Mary Joy Nercua (secretary). At 2nd row, Rae Gel Rivera (core group member), Kevin Rivera, Paul Ramos, Joeynett Almanon (core group member), and Jayson Sosmeña (sergeant-at-arms, Unit 2 leader). At 3rd row, Michael Morillo (core group member), Ryaniel Montaliana, Joshua Ayad, and Davidson Castellano (Unit 1 leader).

FUJITSU IN LIMELIGHT

Plasma Pleasures, a specialty shop catering to all your plasma viewing needs, recently opened at the Ayala Alabang Town Center. One of the premier companies that showcased its products is Eleksis Marketing Corp, exclusive distributors of the Fujitsu Plasma technology and Bose Entertainment Systems. VIPs and guests during the ribbon cutting included (from left) Donnie Tantoco, society columnist Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Irene Chua, EVP of Automatic Center and Wilson So, president of Eleksis Marketing Corp.

ProductFILES

2 ways to kick fat

WHEN it comes to weight control management, it is important for you to choose the product that complements your lifestyle. That's why there's Nutrafit and Exofat Forte.

Nutrafit is ideal for your daily weight management regimen. It is an all-natural dietary supplement that helps you maintain your desired body weight that naturally aids in increasing your metabolism, thus burning those unwanted fats without burning you out.

Exofat Forte soaks out the fat during those times when you just can't avoid an intake of rich fatty foods. It contains Liphosan, a fiber derived naturally from shellfish, which binds about 12 times its own weight to the fat in ingested foods so that it is not absorbed into the body.

So, in whatever situation you find yourself, there's always Nutrafit and Exofat Forte to suit your needs, because diet supplements should always take away your fats and keep you at your best. Call 411-4448 or 413-5079 for more inquiries. Nutrafit and Exofat Forte are available in all leading drugstores and Ellen's Aesthetic Centers nationwide.

EXO
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Congress to begin hearings on ICT Dep't

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

THE COMMITTEE on information and communications technology (ICT) of the House of Representatives has scheduled the first public hearing on the measure creating the Department of ICT.

Chaired by Rep. Simeon Kintanar, the committee will begin public hearings on House Bill 3218 on Jan. 19, a letter from the ICT committee indicated.

"The Committee on Information Communications Technology respectfully invites you or your duly authorized representatives as resource persons on the deliberation of House Bill No. 3218," according to a document obtained by Infotech.

The measure aims to create a "super-agency" that will serve as a policymaking body on ICT. It will also merge existing agencies into a single entity.

Among the agencies or government divisions that will be merged or absorbed by the new department are the National Computer Center, the ICT division of the Department of Transportation and Communications and the Telephone Office.

Meanwhile, the National Telecommunications Commission and the Philippine Postal Corp. will become agencies attached to the new department.

A Commission on Information and Communications Technology was created through an executive order to act as an interim body to the ICT department.

Local online game hires hackers after attack

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

THE PHILIPPINE publisher of online game "Tantra" is now working with whitehat hackers after a major attack last month, an official told Infotech.

"We're working with several whitehat hackers who are hacking the game to find more exploits and bugs," said Mitch Padua, marketing manager of ABS-CBN Multimedia Inc., publisher of online game Tantra.

Tantra is the latest massively multiplayer online role playing (MMORPG) game to enter the Philippines. The game is three-dimensional and is currently under beta testing. It is expected to be launched in February, Padua said.

Padua said any exploits and bugs found by the hackers are immediately turned over to the local publisher who, in turn, sends feedback to South Korean developer Hanbitsoft.

The local publisher is collaborating with hackers "seshomaru" and "fairlight," said Padua.

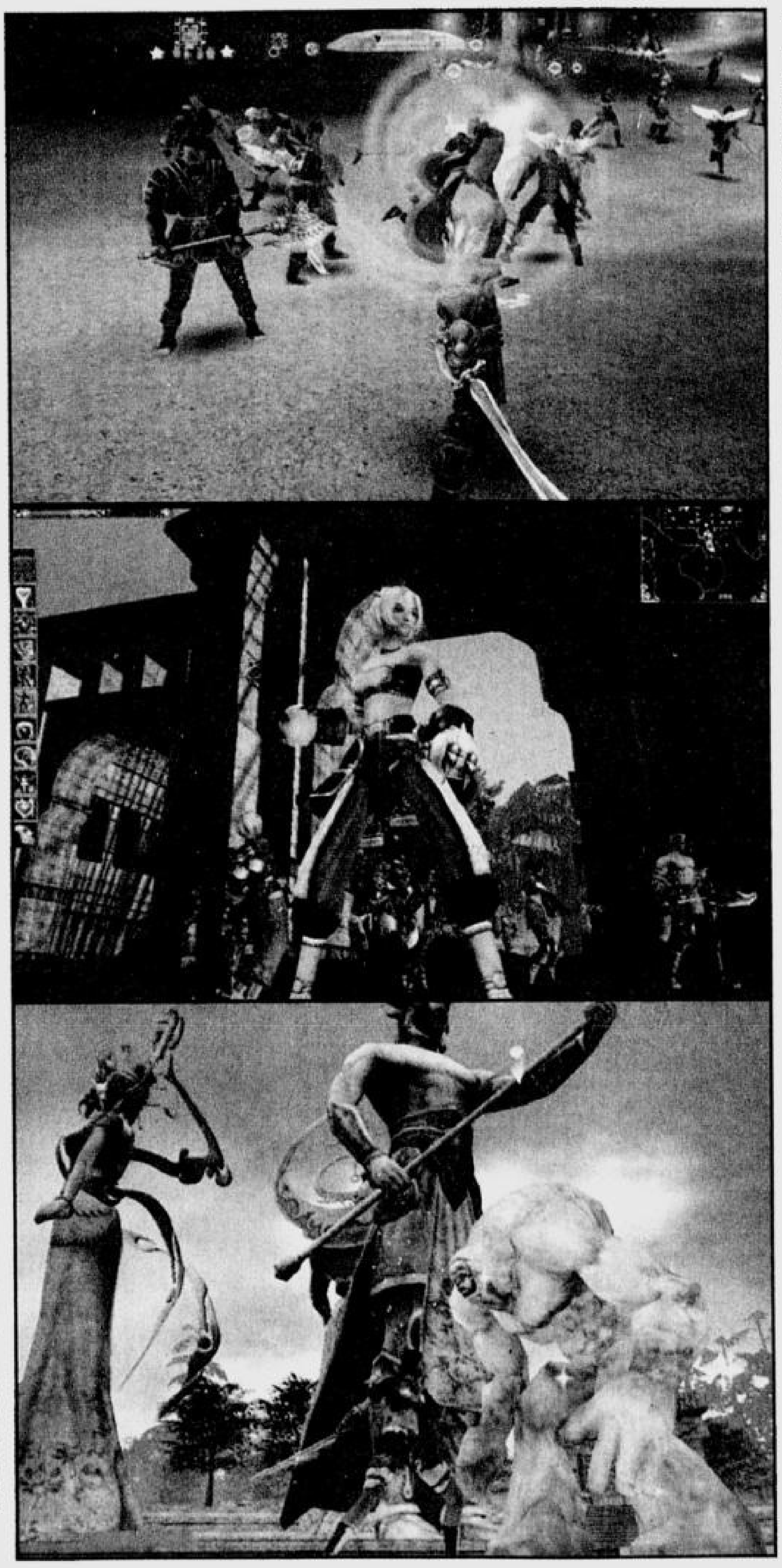
In December, Tantra was hacked by suspected foreign hackers. Padua said the local publisher was able to restore the game in 24 hours, but it had to roll back the online game, affecting more than 80,000 unique users.

Tantra was infiltrated and the service was suspended on Dec. 20, when hackers dumped massive amounts of currency—called Rupiahs—into the game world, ruining its economy and causing a virtual inflation. The game servers were restored on Dec. 21, and ABS-CBN Interactive set up a customer service hotline for the game on Dec. 23.

The Tantra website said in reaction:

"Characters found to have dubious and highly exaggerated amounts of Rupiahs in their possession will have their upgrades and other items forfeited if they were deemed to be acquired through the use of the excessive and illicit stash of Rupiahs. Game logs will be used as the basis for this rollback. We will conduct a deliberate and intensive check of the logs to ensure a fair and thorough assessment. In the interest of fairness and transparency, your elected Council of Elders will be called in to assist us in determining this. Also in response to your observation, edited characters and those suspected to be edited will be permanently removed from the game. Likewise, this will be in cooperation with the elected Council of Elders."

The game administrators also announced a mandatory rollback of all characters in the game. While the date of the rollback has yet to be determined, the announcement indicated this will be based on the time of extraordinary changes in the game economy as determined by the Game Masters in consultation with the Council of Elders.



Gaming takes center stage in 3rd CyberPress forum

THE RISE of computer gaming as a recreation and business model in the Philippines will be this year's theme when the IT Journalists Association of the Philippines, better known as CyberPress, holds its annual forum on Jan. 28 at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila in Makati City.

This year's conference, dubbed "Plug and Play: A Forum on the Philippine Gaming Industry," will tackle the increasing influence of gaming in the local IT industry and in the Philippines in general.

The forum will include presentations and discussions on the development of computer gaming as an industry and as a tool for the academe; its accessibility and viability as a business; and its sociological impact on the national psyche as it continues to gain acceptance among Filipinos.

Resource speakers from the gaming industry as well as the academic sector have been invited to share their ideas and give the lowdown on this emerging phenomenon. Selected schools and organizations were also invited to have hands-on experience and to participate in the discussions.

The event is being supported by Microsoft Philippines, Smart Communications, Sun Microsystems Philippines, Netopia (Digital Paradise Inc.) and STI Education Group.

The forum is an annual project of the CyberPress, the pioneering organization of IT journalists in the Philippines, to discuss and shed light on the most relevant issues and developments in the local IT industry.

Street protests take virtual form on info highway

By Alexander Villafania
INQ7.net

USING the Internet as a medium to deliver cause-oriented propaganda, a group of online activists is ready to beat down on institutions that it deems as a nuisance or threat to the society.

In an e-mail to INQ7.net, the group which calls itself the "BrigadeElektronica Electronic Disturbance Group" said that the Internet can be exploited to parallel street protests or strikes of labor groups. The group said they will support such activities through "virtual sit-ins."

"This 2005 we will seize and occupy any possible gateways of any anti-people, anti-worker, anti-poor and anti-student institutions in the Philippines. We will bring down their servers [and] clog their communication system," BrigadeElektronica said.

The group wants its membership to remain anonymous though they described themselves as a loose network of individuals. However, they maintained that they will conduct their protests only online.

"Electronic resistance is a sign of the times. Previously, [former President Estrada] was toppled by the people using electronic messaging. But this time, discontented people can also possibly flood the streets virtually while there is a massive demonstration offline," the group said.

BrigadeElektronica also gives updates on its activities in two other websites: manila.indymedia.org and www.thehacktivists.com.

The group made its presence known during the recent labor strike at the local plant of apparel maker Gelmart. BrigadeElektronica put up a website (http://www.geocities.com/gelmartworkersonstrike) intended to do a DOS attack on the main website of Gelmart (www.gelmart.com).

The group said the Gelmart virtual picket was only the beginning of a series of activities they will be conducting for the year. They did not specify any other targets of electronic protests.

New venture to market RP as IT destination

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

A NEW venture founded by two industry veterans is set to push the Philippines as a key investment destination for information technology-enabled services (ITES).

Frank Holz, a former Accenture partner and a pioneer in the development of the shared services sector in the Philippines, and Michael Alan Hamlin, managing director of TeamAsia, have established Outsource2Philippines.com that aims to aggressively promote the Philippines as a "premiere IT outsourcing destination."

While the new company will primarily offer consultancy services, the group's founders said they also plan to commission and conduct industry studies relevant to outsourcing initiatives in the country.

"We are constantly receiving requests for information and assistance. [So] it was clear to us and others that a vacuum exists, and that it needs to be filled in order to further accelerate ITES growth in this country, and to make the Philippines a truly respected and strategic outsourcing destination for companies all over the world," said Holz.

Holz who will act as CEO, was among the key industry partners responsible for developing and marketing Accenture's Global Resource Center in Manila, which develops software and other technology-driven solutions for Accenture clients.

Hamlin, on the other end, has worked extensively in IT and ITES sectors in a marketing and communications role. He is also a former member of the business development committee of the defunct Information Technology and E-Commerce Council.

Holz said they are currently in discussions with prospective investors in the United States and Asia.

"The reason the Philippines doesn't have a stronger brand are many. First, it hasn't had the resources its neighbors have to market themselves. Second, there has been no private-sector led initiative to effectively complement government initiatives," Holz lamented.

Both current and prospective investors frequently complain that while the Philippines is now on the outsourcing map, not enough is being done to generate a more positive image compared to rivals such as India and China, he said.

"The Philippines is a great place to invest in, and more people should understand why," the executive added.

RP firm develops anti-spam software for phones

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

SAY goodbye to text spammers, stalkers and annoying text-based ads.

A local company that developed a mobile phone software against cell phone theft has come up with a new software that blocks unwanted text messages or even calls.

Called "Bouncer," the software is a small application that can be installed on mobile phones. Once it runs, it can automatically reject unwanted text messages or calls, according to Jayree Chua, president of local firm Boogs.

The software is still being tested, but it will be available commercially by February, said Chua.

Bouncer works like an e-mail filter. Users have to identify the numbers or contacts they want to block or "bounce." After identifying the numbers or messages, they are automatically rejected by the user's handset.

"It can also work against stalkers and text-based advertisements," said Chua.

The local software company developed Bouncer after getting numerous feedback from clients who wanted to ward off unknown callers without the need to throw away their subscriber identification module (SIM) cards.

AMD, Microsoft talking about low-cost PC package

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

CHIPMAKER American Micro Devices (AMD) and Microsoft Philippines have initiated discussions on a possible collaboration on an affordable PC package to rival Intel's low-cost PC package offered in partnership with government through local distributors, a Microsoft official said.

Regional officials of AMD have met with local officials of Microsoft Philippines, inviting the software company to provide an operating system that would be bundled with the low-cost AMD PC package.

"AMD has contacted us. And we said we're supporting them and giving them a price we're also giving others," said Antonio Javier, managing director of Microsoft Philippines.

Javier declined to confirm whether this affordable PC package is designed to rival the Intel-led People's PC package that comes without an operating system.

"As far as Microsoft is concerned, we're finalizing a lower-SKU (storage keeping unit) product to offer a lower-cost operating system for the Philippines. I really don't know what exactly is the strategy of AMD in the Philippine market," the Microsoft official added. "We have talked to them. It is an option for us. Are we working with them? It is their call. But we're being offered to work with them."

Microsoft Philippines has been working on a "lower-SKU product" to eventually bring down the cost of the Windows operating system in the Philippines.

"We need to come up with an offering to bring down the cost of PCs. We can do this by bringing down the cost of the operating system. We're working on several options, and one is to come up with lower-SKU products. We intend to come up with this lower-cost operating system in the next two months," Javier said.

The Microsoft official lamented that the bulk of the cost of a PC goes to hardware, and not software, as many have perceived.

In its recent project called Teacher's PC, Javier disclosed that the software company gave a 90-percent discount to peg the PC package's cost at P18,000.

Microsoft is now actively working with hardware manufacturers, encouraging them to bring down cost, according to the official.

The great separator

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

A YOUNG man once asked me a very provocative question at one of my leadership conferences. He'd been listening intently all day, and it was obvious that the subjects we were covering were really striking a chord with him.

"I've decided I want to be a leader," he said. "Who do I start leading?"

As I said, this guy was young—he didn't have a company or even a department to run, yet. I could have advised him to read some of my books, get a job managing a few people, and come back to another conference in five years when he had some experience.

But I didn't.

"That's an easy answer," I told him. "Start with yourself."

I wasn't trying to be cute with that response; I was completely serious. If you want to start leading, you must always start with yourself, because if you wouldn't follow yourself, why should anybody else? Becoming the person others want to follow might involve honing certain technical competencies, learning how to be a better motivator, sharpening your ability to cast a vision, identifying your core values, or polishing your organizational skills.

But here's the key: The secret to your success doesn't lie in the specifics; it lies in your willingness to start.

Just how essential is starting? Let me describe it this way. Starting is the great separator. It separates the doers from the do nots. It separates the haves from the have nots. It separates the winners from the whiners. In short, it separates successful people from unsuccessful people.

I've always said the bookends of success are starting and finishing. People who achieve great things must possess both the ability to begin—to be a self-initiator, and the ability to close—to be able to finish well.

In the grand scheme of things, both are equally important. But you can't end well if you don't start. So for the next several issues of "Leadership Wired," we'll talk about how to start successfully.

The first step, as we've already discussed, is to start with yourself. Why is this so important? Here are three reasons.

1. It gives you experience, confidence, integrity, and influence.

Leaders are either travel agents or tour guides. Leaders who are like travel agents send people to places they've never been themselves, while leaders who are like tour guides take their people to places they know well. Instead of saying, "Here's a map—I hope it's accurate," tour-guide leaders can say, "I've been here many times; I know the best way to get around; follow me."

Starting with yourself equips you with the experience, confidence, integrity and influence you need to be a tour-guide leader.

2. You are with yourself more than anyone else.

You may have had trouble finding another leader to mentor you because everyone else is so crunched for time. But you can't use that excuse with yourself—you spend more time with yourself more than anyone else. So don't sit around waiting for someone else to help you—start learning and growing yourself!

3. Start with yourself to give something to others.

At first blush, starting with yourself might sound a bit selfish. But, as anyone who has ever listened to a flight attendant give pre-flight safety instructions can attest, you have to take care of yourself before you can take care of someone else.

You can't export what you don't have. You can't teach what you haven't learned. Starting with yourself isn't putting yourself before others.

It's putting yourself in a position where you can give—your time, your encouragement, your resources, your expertise, etc.—more effectively.

Let me leave you with this bit of advice from the great revolutionary leader M.K. Gandhi: "Be the change you want to see in the world."

How do you do that? The answer is simple. Start with yourself. *Send your questions or comments to slvguru@pldtdsl.net*

Opportunities abound in RP biotechnology

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

SURPRISE. The Philippines is "one of the world's biologically richest countries," according to the Washington-based Conservation International.

In corals alone, the archipelago displays "the richest diversity of corals on the planet."

Charles Darwin saw the great diversity of life in the Galapagos islands, inspiring his work on evolution. But that doesn't compare with the Philippines.

Ecologist Dr. Lawrence R. Heaney, who did research at the Smithsonian Institution said, "it is reasonable to think of the Philippines as the Galapagos multiplied tenfold."

The nation is drawing scientists and pharmaceutical firms, for more than 70 percent of promising anti-cancer drugs come from rainforests like ours.

However, most Filipinos have yet to tap the wealth offered by such rich flora and fauna. They are ignoring the next big wave, biotechnology, a $250-billion industry fighting 200 diseases.

Pinoy snail bags $80M

Take for example the Philippine sea snail (Conus magus)—it has unleashed a bonanza for pharmaceutical giants. With the help of scientists from the University of the Philippines, Neurex, an American biotech firm, has isolated from the snail's venom a toxin called SNX-111.

This toxin paralyzes fish in seconds. It also interrupts pain signals that travel from the spinal cord to the brain. In fact scientists report that the toxin is 100 to 1,000 times more potent than morphine.

So Neurex turned SNX-111 into a painkiller, Ziconitide. Doctors administered it directly to the spinal cord via a small tube. In the first year that the product was marketed, it earned for Neurex $ 80 million.

It also saved the French pharmaceutical giant Elan from bankruptcy, as revealed in the article "Elan's $8 B turnaround" (Biocentury: the Bernstein Report on Biobusiness. Jan. 3, 2005).

Bonanza from 'ampalaya'

Another case, though less exotic, concerns the vegetables we call *ampalaya* and *talong*, or bitter gourd and eggplant.

According to diabetics experts Dr. Julie Cabato and Dr. Marcelino Salango, as cited in the Earth Times news service, both lower glucose levels in the blood.

The bitter truth is that the US National Institute of Health has acquired a US patent on *ampalaya*. In turn, the pharmaceutical company Cromak Research in New Jersey has produced an anti-diabetic diet supplement from the two veggies.

Cromak got the patent for the supplement, under US patent number 5900240. The company now caters to a market of 22 million American diabetics.

Seminar on bio opportunities

What other opportunities can Filipino business extract from biotech? They will be discussed in the first Philippine Biotechnology Venture Summit.

The conference at Makati will be held from Jan. 26 to 29, 2005. It is sponsored by the Philippine Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and the Mapua Institute of Technology, Makati.

The overview of biotech business opportunities covers fields like medicine, food, cosmetics, aquaculture, agriculture and industry. The talks will explain how to assess biotechnology business plans. Investors will learn about "judging the science without a PhD."

One of the speakers is coming in from the United Kingdom, an American expert, Prof. Amber Batata of Cambridge University. She got her PhD in health policy from Harvard. The summit will discuss the legal framework as well: biotech regulation in the local and international scene, intellectual property, and how biotech start-ups use regulations to their advantage. The conference features five PhD speakers.

Transporting live fish

Filipino biotech entrepreneurs will speak on their current work.

For example, live fish is very much in demand in restaurants around Asia. The problem though with exporting live fish is that the weight of the tank and the water adds greatly to transport costs. Bonifacio Comandante, who is pursuing his doctorate degree in marine biology, has invented a remedy.

His special solution puts the fish into hibernation.

"It was really a fish. And there was no water. And it was breathing!" the INQUIRER (June 19, 2004) quoted Veneeth Iyengar, a US Peace Corps volunteer, who saw a demonstration of the technology.

The engineer likewise amazed Hong Kong businessmen with his trial shipments of the sleeping fish. The fish regain consciousness after nine hours.

"Let it be known in the fishing world that the Philippines has now developed a technology for waterless transport of live fish, a method that will revolutionize the way we normally handle fish after harvest," said then Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo.

Comandante is waiting for the Philippine patent. Then he will go global with the franchise of his award-winning technology.

It's time that Filipinos profit from their own spectacular biological wealth. *Comments to darroyo@philonline.com.*

Redefining strategy: A resource-based approach

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Niceto Poblador

FOR OVER a generation, conventional thinking on business strategy has been dominated by one name: Michael Porter.

Porter's Competitive Positioning model of strategy focuses on markets and industries as the key elements in the formulation of business strategies.

According to this doctrine, industry structure has clear implications on corporate performance, and that firms should therefore seek to establish a dominant position in their respective industries.

Dominance can be achieved either by being the lowest-cost producer in the industry, or by turning out differentiated—and superior—products.

Competitive advantage is gained by the firm by adapting effectively to the so-called Five Forces, which reflect the intensity of market competition, threats from entrants and substitute products, and bargaining power of customers and suppliers.

In the face of increasing complexity and uncertainty brought about by the breaking down of traditional industry boundaries, rapid changes in production technologies and consumer preferences, and changing political and social realities, the Porter model has become less and less relevant in today's business world.

This is especially true in the service sectors, particularly those that are engaged in the production of information goods, for example, firms in media, communication and information, and financial services.

These industries comprise what is known as the New Economy.

Alternative strategy

According to an alternative strategy framework, a firm's competitive edge derives not from its vantage position in the industry, but from its unique economic resources, capabilities and competencies. Among these resources are the firm's managerial skills, informational capabilities and administrative processes.

According to this Resource-Based View (RBV) of strategy, firms should look more inwardly into the internal workings of their organizations rather than outwardly for strategic advantages.

While the Porter model did consider the firm's internal operations—or "value chain," as he calls them—as a factor in achieving their strategic objectives, he focused on traditional management processes.

These so-called "management functions" are more appropriate in Old-Economy type of operations.

What, then, are the key elements of this alternative strategy framework, and what managerial skills are needed to establish a competitive edge using such a framework?

According to this view, managers should look at their organizations less as players in an unending game of competition with their current and potential rivals, but as a collection of differentiated resources that are organized and utilized within a given administrative framework.

Maximizing value

The main responsibility of management is to maximize value by developing and enhancing their unique organizational resources or competencies. This is done by creating a culture that is conducive to collaborative effort and continuous learning.

Two types of competencies are especially relevant. The first is called routines. These are organizational skills that embody the knowledge that are needed to repeatedly implement specialized services from the firm's resources.

Routines are developed by the firm through a process of trial-and-error learning, and once set in place, are implemented more or less uniformly and automatically.

While routines are essential for efficient operation, they also hinder the firm's ability to adapt to changing circumstances. The needed flexibility in responding to rapid and unanticipated change requires what are called organizational capabilities.

Capabilities are higher-order managerial skills that reflect the firm's ability to sustain coordinated effort in the face of rapid change.

This requires the occasional shifting around of decision rights and the reallocating of task in a manner that would enable the firm to best achieve its strategic goals.

The emergent internal organization structure should be designed in such a way as to create a "shared context" that help in the integration and effective utilization of local knowledge.

Through organizational learning, routines and capabilities change over time. However, this learning process depends in part on the firm's existing resource base, and available options are therefore limited.

It is this "path-dependence" of organizational processes that makes the firm unique in its competencies, which in the RBV is the primary source of competitiveness in today's world of business.

Shifting focus

As with the Porter model (which we should regard as a complementary to the RBV), this strategic thrust requires a shifting of focus away from immediate financial results, which managers are wont to pursue for understandable reasons, towards enhancing value that reflects the firm's ability to sustain its revenue-generating potential over an extended time horizon.

(The author is a knowledge management consultant, former professor of University of the Philippines, and current professor at the Baguio Colleges Foundation. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

Tale of an Englishman who fell in love with RP

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

BELLORD

IAN DAVID Bellord still wears trousers (not pants), watches football (not soccer), walks on a footpath (not sidewalk), and rides the lift (not the elevator).

But in 10 years since he bought a plane ticket to the Philippines with no promise of a job, this Englishman in Manila has become as Filipino as *adobo*.

Unlike many of his countrymen who set foot in the country with nifty expatriate packages—a house in Forbes Park, luxury vehicles with a chauffeur, education for the entire family—he had to practically beg for a job.

He led a comfortable life in England but got a taste of the Philippines during the holidays of 1994, and was hooked.

"I really did not want to leave. I was so depressed on the plane," Bellord tells Business Monday.

He ran across an article in a magazine on the plane about a business process outsourcing company that was then known as Saztec Philippines, now SPI Technologies.

"The article talked about this company's philosophy. What attracted me was the president's saying that the first priority of the company was to serve God and to look after employees. I was intrigued," he says.

He wrote the president of the company as soon as he got back to England enumerating his credentials and experience in companies such as McDonnel Douglas Information Systems, BIS Perthcrest and TSB Bank Group, hoping to land a job and go back to the country he fell in love with.

Weeks passed and he got no response.

But he made up his mind to go back to the Philippines and leave his destiny to chance. This despite receiving a call from Saztec two weeks before he was set to leave that there was no place for him in the company.

He boarded the plane, knocked on the doors of Saztec and begged for a meeting, confident he had something to contribute to the company's growth.

Just 30 minutes into the meeting, he got the job.

Not a cushy job, but an entry-level position that put his salary even below that received by most Filipinos in the company. He didn't have enough money to buy a car or live in a big apartment.

But he persevered. Over the next 10 years, he went up the ranks from marketing manager and MIS consultant to president and chief operating officer of SPI Transact, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SPI Technologies that provides BPO (business process outsourcing) services, such as conversion of published books into digital data.

Since March of last year, he was put in charge of global operations support to major clients, and operations in Europe and in the US.

Bellord says he got ahead not because he was a foreigner, but because he worked harder than most people and had a view of the bigger picture.

Intimate knowledge of Filipino culture (his wife is Filipino) is also a definite plus, making him a better motivator of his employees, compared to other foreign nationals in the company.

As head of SPI Transact, his responsibility is to drive growth and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the boom in the BPO sector, particularly in the Philippines.

Bellord says it was not difficult to get the Filipino staff to come together and achieve that dream because they take pride in the work that they do.

It also helps, he says, that he rarely loses his temper. He prefers to get his staff to work by giving them a clear view of what they want to achieve, and the tools and space they need to meet those goals.

"I would say I have a gentle nature. I do not easily lose my temper because it is counterproductive. You lose people's respect," he says.

In his early days he hardly took a day off, now he has more time for himself. He now has a car and lives in a better house. He helps his wife raise his three young sons who have the best of both English and Filipino worlds.

Just like their father.

BUSINESS

GOCCs' net borrowings rise to ₱8.7B

STATE-OWNED firms relied heavily on the national government to finance their operations last year, forcing their net borrowings to balloon to P8.795 billion in the first three months of 2004.

The latest figure on the government's net lending to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs) was 193 percent higher, or almost double, than the P4.535 billion recorded during the first three months of 2003.

Net lending is the difference between the amount of money released by the national government to borrowing GOCCs and the amount of money the government received from those that have already paid in a given period.

The increase in net lending was due to the substantial rise in financial support requested by seriously troubled GOCCs, such as the National Power Corp., the Light Rail Transit Authority, and the National Electrification Administration.

According to data from the Department of Finance, the latest net lending figure was a result of the P13.615 billion that the government lent to some GOCCs, and the P4.82 billion worth of payments it received from other state-owned companies. The heaviest borrowers were Napocor (P6.473 billion), the National Irrigation Administration-Casecnan (P2.508 billion), NEA (P863 million), and LRTA (P496 million).

Although the net lending figure showed a significant increase, it was still within the government's target of P8.99 billion for the whole of 2004. The DOF said it expects the full-year net lending figure to stay within the target. *Michelle V. Remo*

GAINS IN TRADE MISSIONS ABROAD

RP firms earn $248M in export sales

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PHILIPPINE firms in 2004 earned a total of $248.9 million, or about P14 billion, in export sales through trade missions and exhibits here and abroad, the Center for International Trade Expositions and Mission reported.

Data from Citem, an agency under the Department of Trade and Industry, show that a total of 1,790 companies were able to establish links with 17,219 potential trade partners last year.

The companies took part in 38 trade missions abroad as well as local and foreign exhibits held in 2004, which was 15 percent more than the 33 activities programmed for that year.

Domestic sales amounted to P78.39 million, the bulk of which were registered in transactions during the Manila FAME International show, e-Services—an information technology and IT-enabled services conference and exhibit—and International Food Exhibition Philippines.

"The combination of sustained international promotions in 2003 and 2004, plus initiatives such as the Very Important Buyer programs of (Manila FAME, e-Services and IFEX) have helped create and maintain vital business contacts with ... buyers in various countries," Citem said.

Also, Citem said funding from the Taiwan-based Manila Economic and Cultural Office and the Asean-Japan Center, as well as sponsorship from the Commission on Information and Communication Technology, helped in the local firms' participation in eight "unprogrammed" trade missions, namely, those sent to: the Philippine Food and Coffee Fest in Taiwan; Asean Food and Beverage Exhibition in Japan; Apec e-Commerce Fair in China; Bangkok ITC Expo in Thailand; MIPCOM in France; OutsourceWorld in the United States; Style Asia in Japan; and Philippine-Laos Wood Business Development Mission in Vientiane City.

Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said the DTI was optimistic that the country would achieve its 10-percent export target for 2004. He cited data from the National Statistics Office showing that exports reached 8.9 percent in the first 10 months.

The DTI expects exports in 2005 will exceed the performance in 2004, Aquino said.

"The country's international trading position is strengthened with the signing of bilateral agreements, favorable laws for business, increased investments in the export sector and improved export plan in the next five years," he said.

YAP

Agri credit gap seen to hit ₱400B in '05

By Christine A. Gaylican

A CREDIT gap of about P400 billion this year is expected to hamper efforts of the Department of Agriculture to boost lending in the agriculture sector, a study made by the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) showed.

According to the ACPC, the credit gap is the difference between the amount of credit being demanded and the loans that are actually granted by state-owned and commercial banks to farmers and fisherfolk.

Small farmers continue to have little access to commercial loans, while the impression that the agriculture sector poses substantial credit risks remains, said the ACPC, an attached agency of the DA.

"Credit should have flowed to critical support infrastructure such as farm-to-market roads, marketing facilities, ports and irrigation systems," the study said. However, financing is hard to come by because farmlands, particularly those covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, are not eligible as collateral for the Land Bank of the Philippines holds first mortgage on all these lands.

"While the Agri-Agra Law requires banks to set aside 25 percent of their total loan portfolio for agriculture loans, banks are allowed to divert such funds to government securities," the study said.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap said that there was a slight improvement in the banking sector's confidence in the agriculture sector as commercial banks, including Allied Bank, Equitable-PCI Bank, Landbank, Philippine Veterans Bank and the United Coconut Planters Bank, have provided more than P2 billion in loans through the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp. last year.

"This is something that we should continuously work on," Yap said.

Agriculture is an important sector of the Philippine economy. In real terms, the sector accounts for nearly 20 percent of the gross domestic product, according to economist Dr. Rolando Dy of the University of Asia and the Pacific.

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VILMA Santos in "Mano Po 3"

ANGEL Locsin and Richard Gutierrez, stars of "Sigaw"

JUDY Ann Santos as a guerrilla leader in "Aishite Imasu"

Memo to RP movies: Back to basics, please

By Gibbs Cadiz

THE ENTRIES may have been raised to eight, and the movies just as noisily hyped, but it's safe to say that the just-concluded Metro Manila Film Festival was the weakest, quality-wise, in recent memory.

Of the five we managed to watch, four stood out—but for all the wrong reasons. They were striking illustrations of what is wrong, and basically so infuriating, about mainstream Filipino movies today: their unrealism, artifice and lack of plausibility.

Egregious miscasting

Take "Mano Po 3." Can an otherwise good movie be sabotaged by egregious miscasting? Certainly a noted director like Joel Lamangan would know this.

So what was the youthful Jay Manalo doing as Vilma Santos' husband in "Mano Po 3?" In real life, the Mayor of Lipa does have a husband much younger than she is, and in many of her previous movies she'd been paired with leading men half her age. Yes, she still can pull it off.

But in "Mano Po 3," Manalo is supposed to be Santos' and Christopher de Leon's contemporary from their college years—three First Quarter Storm activists who would see their lives ruptured by political repression.

While Santos and De Leon play off each other beautifully as usual, Manalo is stuck in the thankless part of looking and sounding much more mature than his actual years. To Santos' matronly visage he offers a shallow, puerile counterfoil, with only a pair of owl glasses perched on his nose to simulate gravitas. Please.

Never for a moment does his scenes with Santos crackle with spousal tension. Instead, their Oedipal undertones, unintentional but pervasive, lend a freakish, incredulous touch to the movie.

That kind of off-kilter casting is so distracting that it capsizes whatever goodwill "Mano Po 3" builds from its streamlined storytelling and committed acting. The film is much better than its predecessors (but heaven forbid Mother Lily has a "Mano Po 4!"). Bad casting, however, renders it essentially unbelievable.

Flippant and incoherent

Lamangan's second entry, "Aishite Imasu," suffers from gross implausibility, too—not so much from its casting as from its polemics, narrative incoherence and shockingly flippant grasp of history.

MEMO/ C3

(FAR LEFT): The cast of "So Happy Together;" (left) Cesar Montano, director-star of "Panaghoy sa Suba"

Joel Lamangan's filmfest entries are miscast, gender agitprop, and implausible. 'Sigaw' is all visuals, no brains. Cesar Montano's 'Panaghoy' is refreshing and honest

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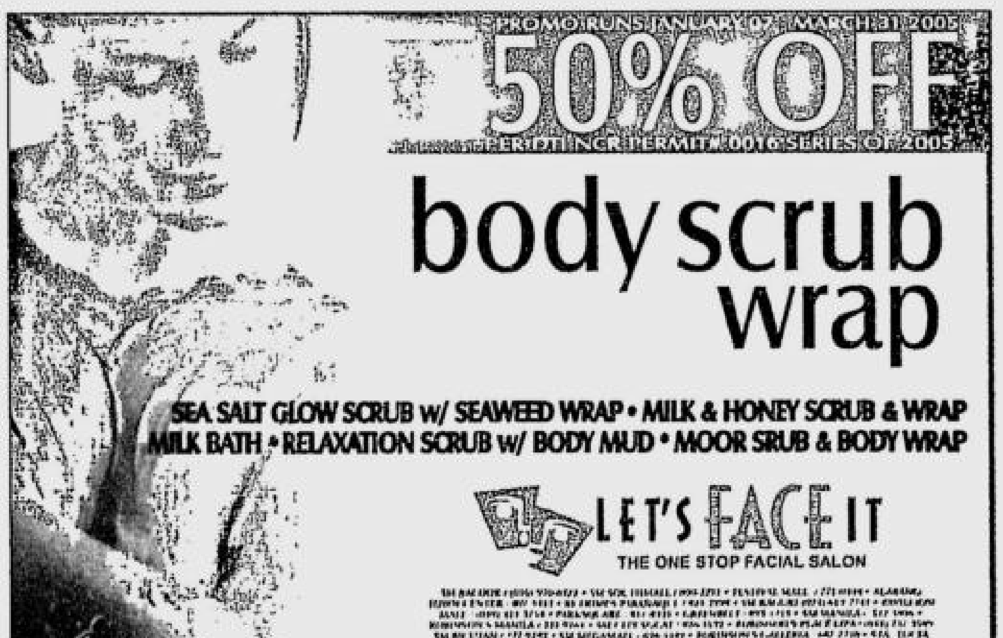
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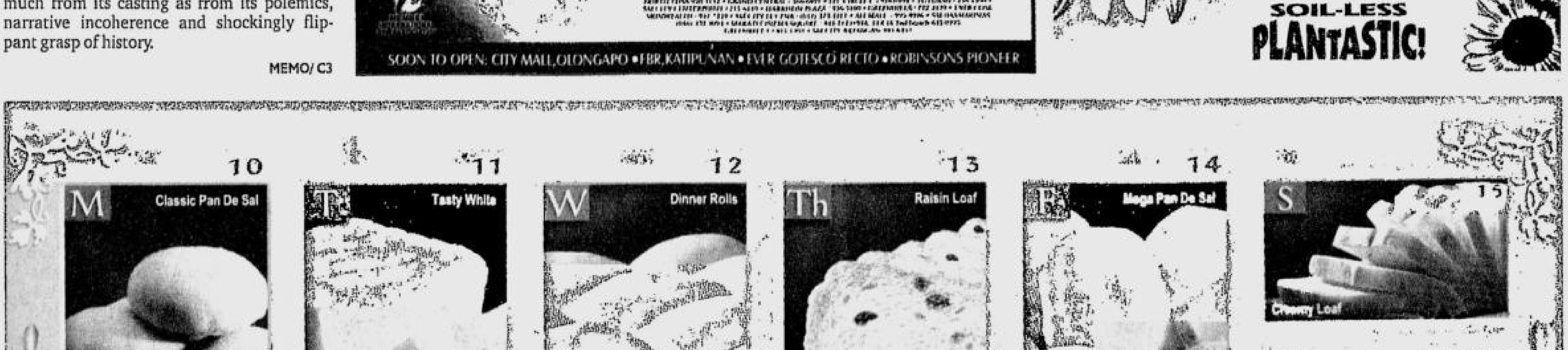
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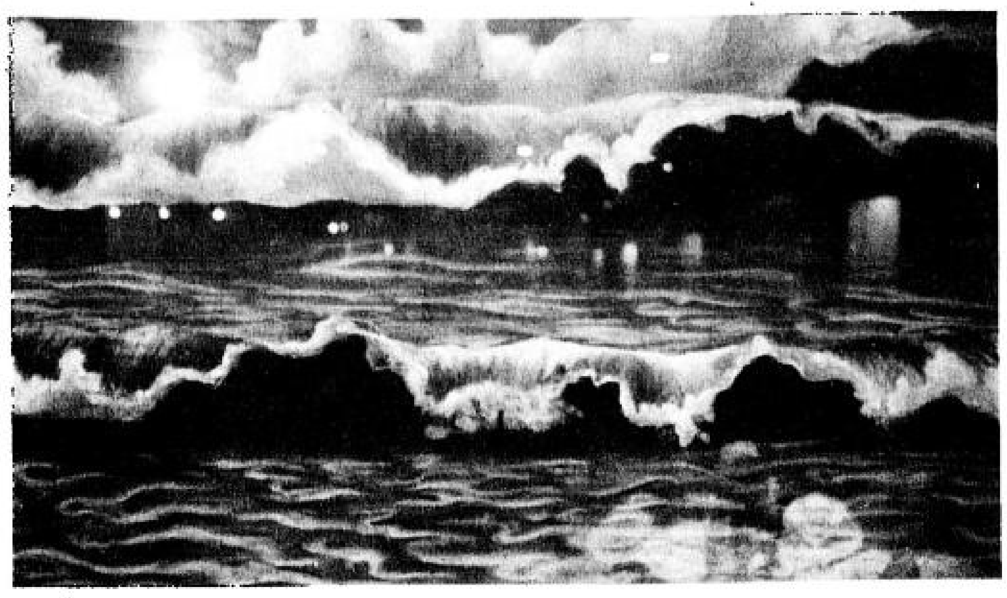
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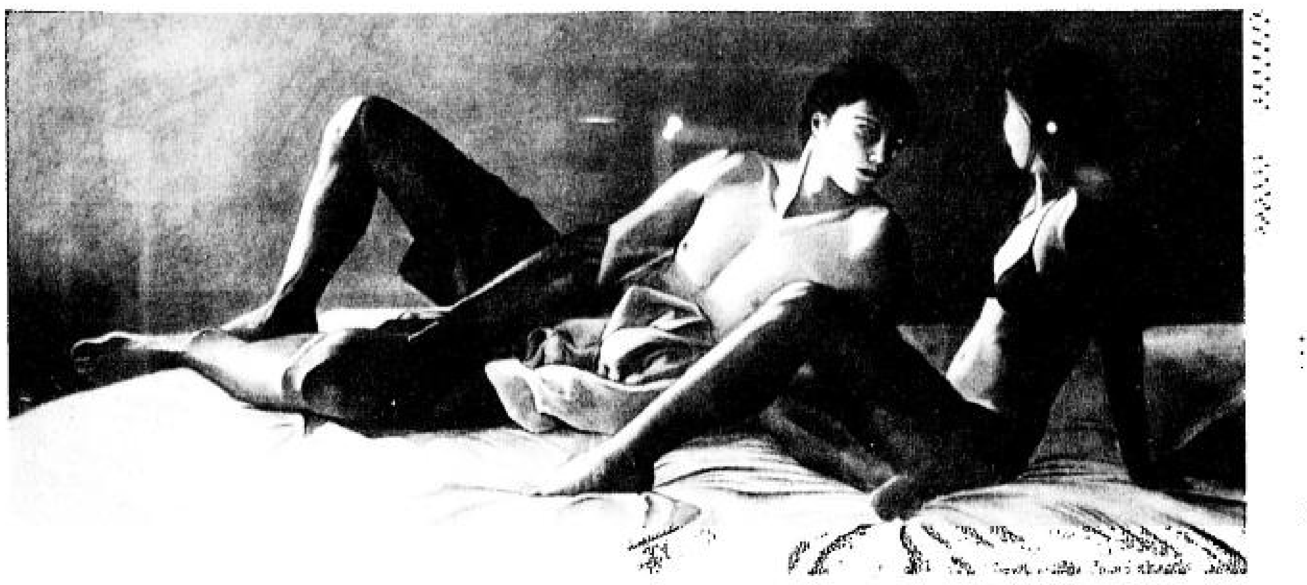
"BOY AND GIRL"

Art of solitude and intimacy

TOP ARTIST Manuel Baldemor, INQUIRER editor in chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc and art collector Lala Tinio and Dr. Eleuterio Pascual open the exhibit; artist Jill Raymundo in black

Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan and Mandy Navasero

TOP ARTIST Manuel Baldemor, art connoisseur Dr. Eleuterio Pascual, and Inquirer editor in chief Letty Jimenez Magsanoc unveiled "New Works," an exhibit by US-based artist Jill Raymundo, at Le Soufflé in Ortigas Center last week.

Raymundo, who's related to Felix Resurrecion Hidalgo, has mounted a series of drawings in charcoal paint revolving around solitude and intimacies.

Raymundo, born in 1982, lives in both Manila and Vancouver. She completed her Bachelor's in Fine Arts at the Columbus College of Art and Design and Parson's School of Design in New York. Her work has been seen in the Canzani Center, Rhodes Tower and Beaton Gallery in Columbus, Ohio; Corcoran Gallery in Washington DC; and Corning Gallery, Parsons Gallery and Scholastics Building in New York. Raymundo won the National Pentad Scholastics Award in 1998 and 3 Best of Shows in 2000, and a scholarship at the Columbus College.

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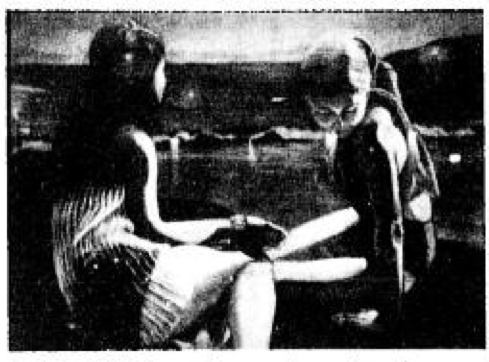
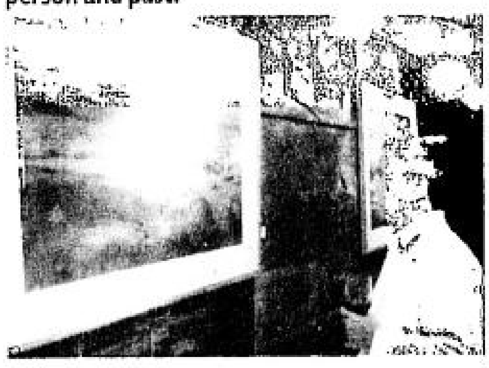
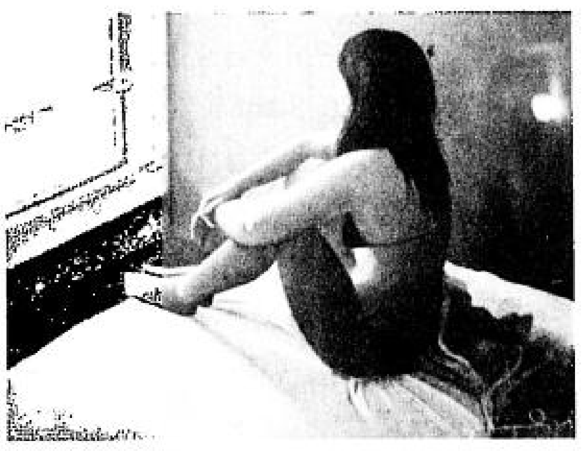

RAYMUNDO says her works explore her person and past.


TEYET Pascual views "Seascape."

JUN AND Cora Raymundo, and Tina Mendoza


RAYMUNDO calls her work personal and intimate.

TINA Legaspi, Beth Brion, Marivic Carunchо, Ramona R. Nava and Tita Raymundo

PILAR Paz-Jimenez, Delia Baldemor, Sarah Roxas, Becky Roxas, Tricia and Karla Jimenez, and Jimenez-Magsanoc (seated)

The best of artful year 2004

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

UNLIKE previous years that perfunctorily came and went, 2004 provided a most fertile ground for artists to reflect on national and global issues.

A most decisive one was voting for president. Many artists and cultural workers were unable to decide up to the last minute who was truly fit to run the country for the next six years.

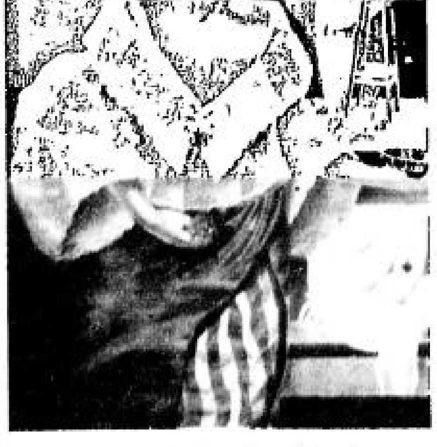
Regrettably, the man who would be president, who cast for half a century a larger-than-celluloid image, was doomed to a tragic fate, at yearend sealed by his own mortality.

The local art world finally produced another global artist, Leonard Aguinaldo of the Philip Morris Asean Art Awards fame. Kawayan de Guia and John Frank Sabado gave the country a near-total domination of the competition.

Aguinaldo, a 34-year-old Baguio-born Cordillera native, is best known as a mixed artist through his solo exhibitions. His winning work depicted his trademark multi-picture approach to storytelling, combining the imagery of East and West, traditional and contemporary, mystical and sensual, in a bold attempt to create a rich tapestry of signs, symbols and sentiments.

For his truly meritorious achievements, Aguinaldo is our choice for Artist of 2004, a gift to us in these distressing times.

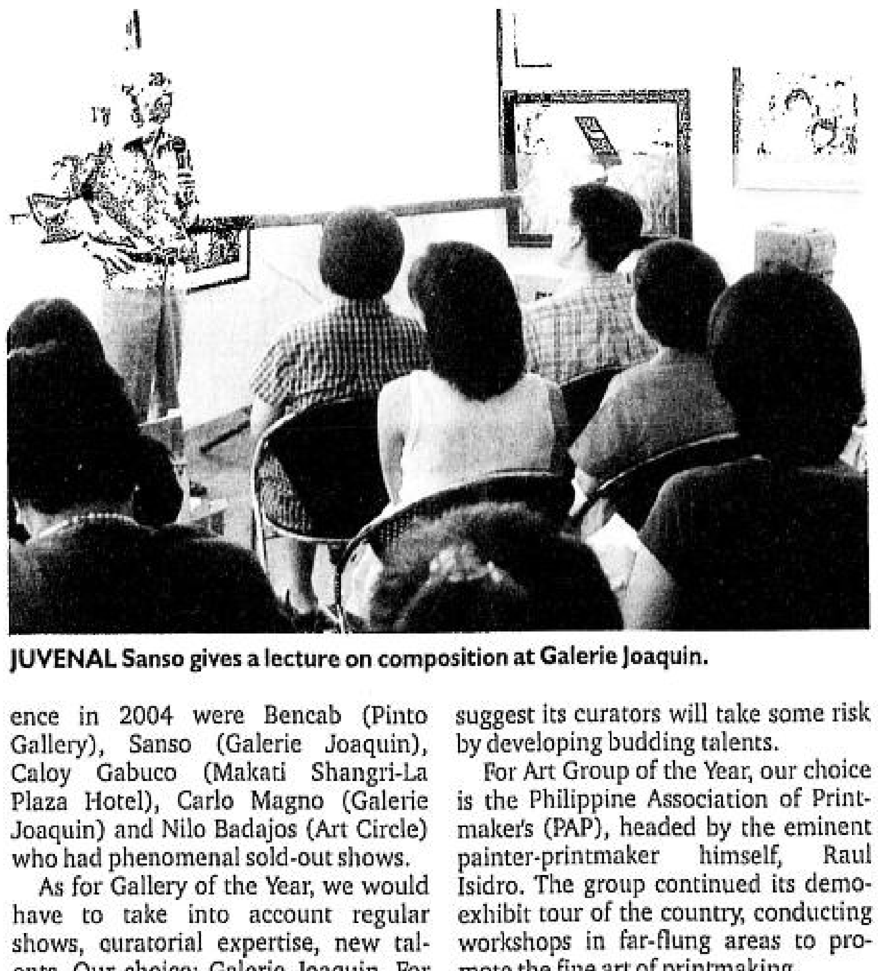
Other artists who mattered in 2004 were Lindslee, who re-viewed the concept of social realism that swept the art world in the 1970s with his new iconography. Called "SR" and mounted at the Big & Small Gallery, the show focused on urban poverty and social malaise as seen in the day-to-day squalor, the choking congestion and the widespread apathy that pervades the entire metropolis.


JERRY Morada's "Ang Pag-ibig ni Maria," Galerie Joaquin's first major show for 2005

Jose Tence Ruiz

Another artist who provided a bright spot for 2004 was Jose Tence Ruiz, in a new series called "Paraisado," (at the Pinto Art Gallery in Antipolo) a vernacular contraption of paradise/paralyzed. With scraps of wood gathered from heaps of city junk, Ruiz cleverly and wittily layered them into structures of eminent Gothic cathedral perched atop a rickety *kariton*.

Thus emerged a powerful metaphor for the ever-widening gap in the social strata, the inequitable distribution of wealth. The collection of cathedrals (we have churches all over the land) ferried by carts was enriched by disturbing imagery of post-apocalyptic scenes.


JUVENAL Sanso gives a lecture on composition at Galerie Joaquin.

Other artists who made a big difference in 2004 were Bencab (Pinto Gallery), Sanso (Galerie Joaquin), Caloy Gabuco (Makati Shangri-La Plaza Hotel), Carlo Magno (Galerie Joaquin) and Nilo Badajos (Art Circle) who had phenomenal sold-out shows.

As for Gallery of the Year, we would have to take into account regular shows, curatorial expertise, new talents. Our choice: Galerie Joaquin. For most of the turbulent year, Galerie Joaquin 28 shows, both in their San Juan home base and their branch at The Podium.

Galerie Joaquin also wields curatorial expertise in both planning and executing shows, displaying such professional savvy. We also admire Galerie Joaquin's commitment to developing new talents as shown in their bright roster of emerging artists belonging to the Guevarra Group.

A most worthy runner-up is Galleria Duemila, whose shows are equally curated with élan and erudition, though I suggest its curators will take some risk by developing budding talents.

For Art Group of the Year, our choice is the Philippine Association of Printmaker's (PAP), headed by the eminent painter-printmaker himself, Raul Isidro. The group continued its demo-exhibit tour of the country, conducting workshops in far-flung areas to promote the fine art of printmaking.

The PAP also enriched Filipino aesthetics and provided local artists with a medium that best suits the times. Their exhibit, "Bakat ng Limbag," is on an extended run. Their Open Fine Print competition, drawing participants from all over the country, is truly national in scope and reach.

Another group that enlivened the art scene last year was the Art Association of the Philippines, organizer of the 57-year-old AAP Annual.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

Artists, writers, filmmakers at Conspiracy Café

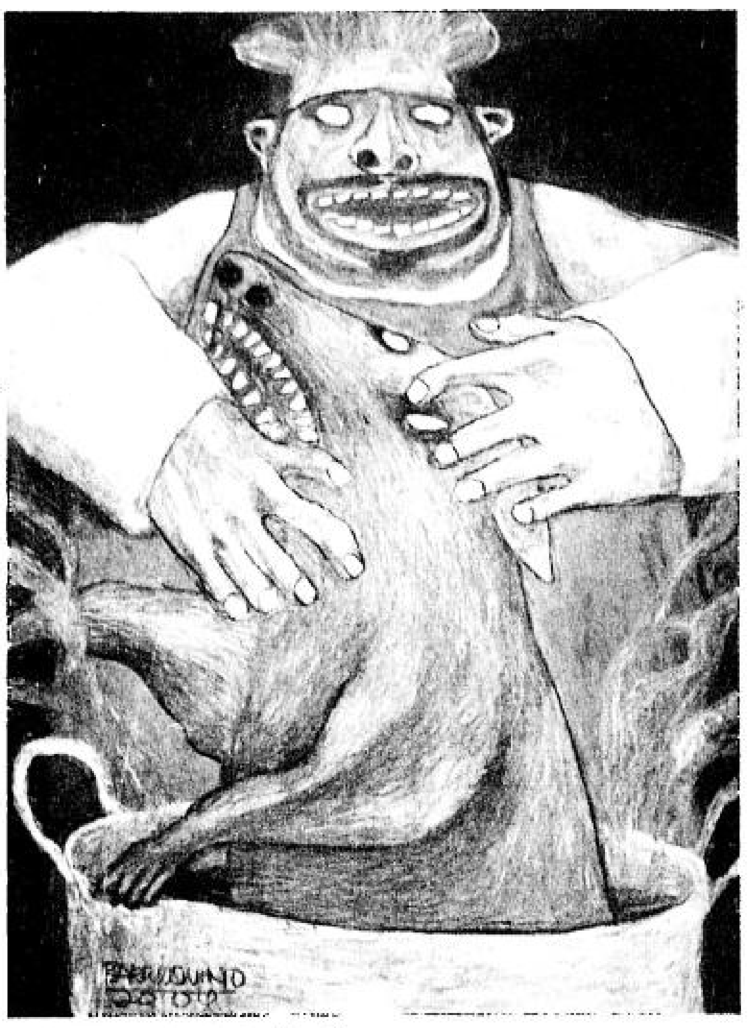
FOR THE first two months of 2005, Conspiracy Garden Café in Quezon City will offer presentations from playwrights to filmmakers and visual artists.

Last Jan. 4, the Writers' Bloc launched its first book, a collection of 10-minute plays titled "10x10x10" published by the University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.

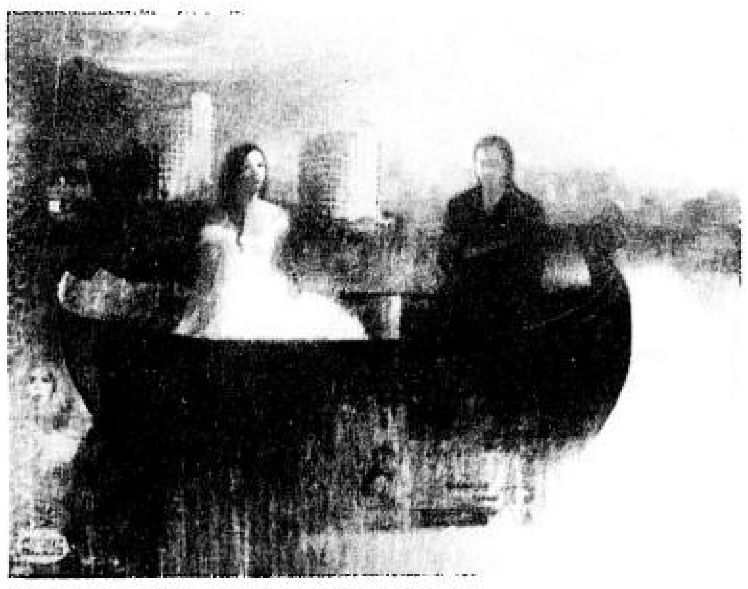
On Jan. 11, pop icon Lourd Ernest de Veyra, poet Ramil Gulle, poet-performer Nerisa del Carmen Guevara and other artists from UST will be featured; on Jan. 18, award-winning filmmakers—Khavn de la Cruz, Lav Diaz, Roxlee, together with Norman Wilwayco, who will also launch his new novel— will reinvent themselves as "The Brockas"; and on Jan. 25, cause-oriented poet-painter Roger Endaya will exhibit his words and works on canvas.

Poets from the Ateneo de Manila University, headed by Dr. Benilda Santos and Yol Jumendang, will be the opening salvo for the Love Month on Feb. 1; University of the Philippines Ugnayan ng mga Manunulat will launch its new collection on Feb. 8; Valentine's Day Special is for romantic poetry and love stories on Feb. 15; and Angono's pride, poet-teacher Ligaya Tiamson Rubin, will launch her new books—as well as her career as a performing artist—on Feb. 22.

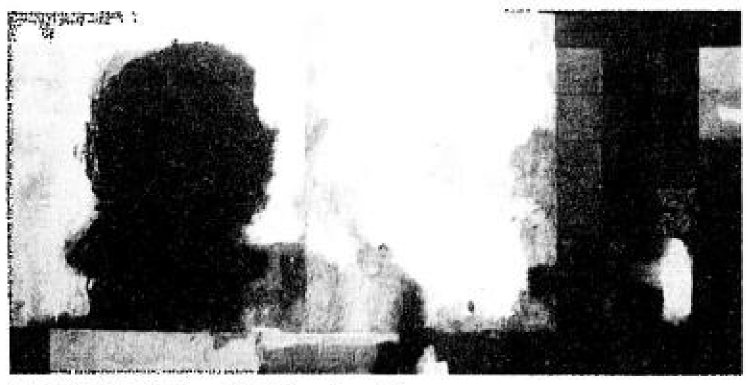
Call 9221830 or 4532170.



ANDRES Barrioquinto's "Pest"



C.J. Tañedo's "The Sacred and the Profane"



LINDSLEE'S "Man with Many Faces"

Art as God's hound

Award-winning UST artists tackle the sacred and the profane

By Lito B. Zulueta

INNOCENCE and knowledge clash and perhaps meld in "Dog God," the inaugural show of the newly formed Young Thomasian Artists Circle (YTAC) opening today at the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences. "Innocence" because these are artists who, despite establishing early on their reputations through commercial exhibits and art awards, are still ripening toward maturity. "Knowledge" because art is an epistemology. And art as the acquisition of wisdom is often wrenching, a crushing of the old gods.

The problematic here is that for its first exhibit, YTAC, which has been initiated by Fr. Isidro C. Abaño, O.P., the UST Museum director and concurrent UST secretary general (and the former dean and regent of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design), has chosen a "religious" theme. Fr. Abaño and the exhibit's curator, Prof. Joselyn Dare Tullao, together with the nine young artists, have chosen a predictable route to merge the concerns and artistic modes of artists who, after all, have trained at the Pontifical University, "the" Catholic University of the Philippines.

The theme challenges the artists, according to the curatorial notes, "to convey their inner sensibilities... associating philosophy, psychology and religion in unraveling the eternal questions revolving around the mystery of the sacred and the profane."

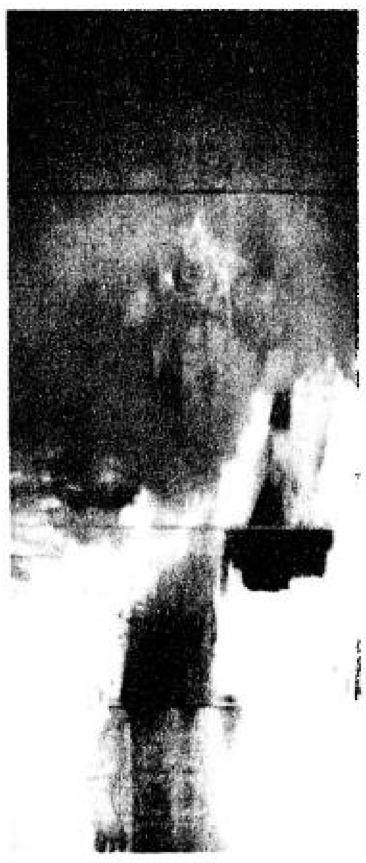
The religious problematic here is really the yoke of the Dominican sponsors, who, after all, have all the right to insist that art within their academic groves be, well, sanitized and academic. But you don't expect that sort of art from young artists whose visions tend to be rebellious and even anti-sectarian.

But perhaps this is the Museum's way of breaking out of the predictable mold. "Dog God" is not your predictable devotional art. It is something like the giant metal sculpture of Christ emerging from a twisted sea of corals by the Italian Pericle Fazzine that graced the Paul VI Hall recently when Pope John Paul II led a prayer service for the tens of thousands who died during the Dec. 26 tsunamis. The exhibit, composed of mostly large works, is stark and even revelatory, like Moses' burning bush.

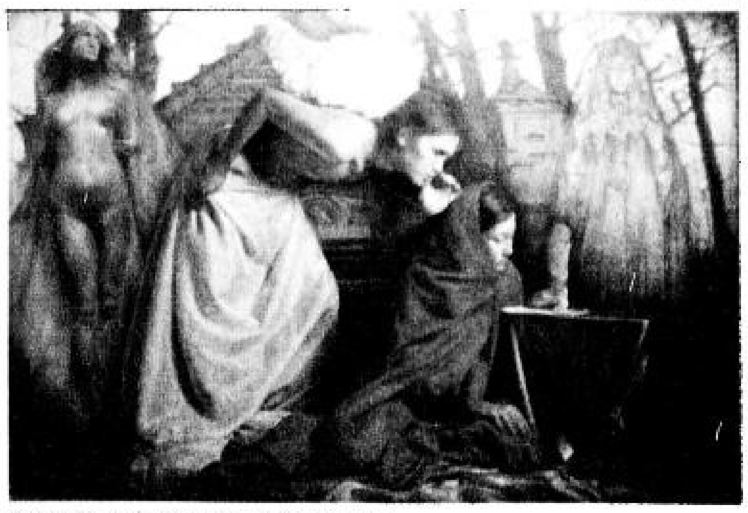
Wesley Valenzuela's mixed-media works, "Love and Devour" and "Biting the Hands that Feed," reflect the dialectic between faith and un-faith, the former depicting the tendency of love toward self-consumption, and the latter showing the paradox of the praying man who can say grace before meals and at the same time, prey on others.

Jaime Jesus Pacena II's digital art interventions are remarkable for their sense of experiment. The figures are accented with spikes and dashes that look like the furies hounding their objects of fate. Meanwhile, Andres Barrioquinto puts to good use his gift of parody with his cartoonish depictions of humans in various states of psychological mutation.

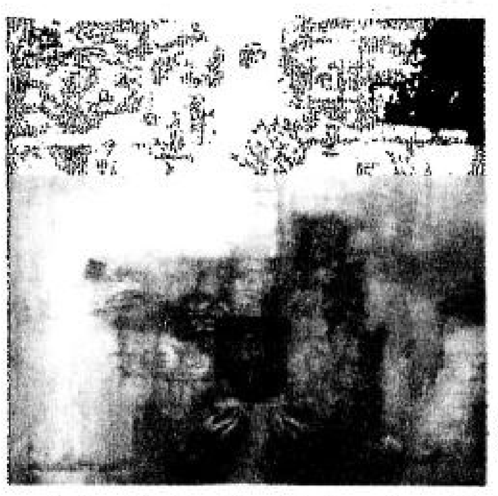
Ivan Roxas employs his skills at graphic realism and classical composition with his "Arcane of the Fallen," in which he shows himself, in Grecian robe, whispering something to a woman scribe in red. One is at a loss to determine what is "arcane" or "fallen" about the work, but it still manages to intrigue because the woman appears like an evangelist getting a dictation from a holy seducer.



BUEN Calubayan's intriguing four-paneled work



IVAN Roxas's "Arcane of the Fallen"



WESLEY Valenzuela's "Biting the Hands that Feed"

C.J. Tañedo displays again his sensitive soul in "The Sacred and the Profane," in which he shows himself with a woman in white on a boat adrift amid the ghostly urbanscape, their remoteness from one another vast and unremitting, like Tanedo's evocations of his childhood, which are often lonely and even depressing.

Lawrence Borsoto shows religious wit in "Reciprocating Wall," in which the crucifix on the wall in the foreground is complemented by a boy playing hand games with the wall in the foreground, humanity touching base with divinity through fellow humanity.

Lindslee has done something striking in "Man with Many Faces," a mixed-media abstraction that seems both disparate and singular. The conceit here is that in putting the "faces" together, contrapuntal that they may appear, Lindslee exercises the godlike omnipotence that unites dissonances together. The impact is both jarring and reassuring.

Mark Magistrado has none of Lindslee's love for discordance. His "Descent" is a work of singular confidence and boldness. Although the darkness of the pit is intense, the flash of light above is quite overwhelming, Lucifer's precipitous fall more than checked by the unrelenting light of justice.

Buen Calubayan once more employs his daring structural verve in devising a work from four frames in which figures—a male seemingly pinned down by nails, a female with classical proportions—are bathed in coastal layers of dark shades. This is art teetering between the representational and the non-representational, like the spiritual trying to break out of the corporeal.

The show may yet portray man's grasping of the spirit. The playful pun of the title is not really to demean God, but to evoke the eternal quest. If used as a verb, "dog" connotes the relentless search for God, like Francis Thompson's "Hound of God." The title likewise fits in with Dominican iconography since the black friars are known through history as "the hounds of the Lord." Overall, this is a devout exhibit that shows the dogged art of the young.

"Dog God" opens at 6 tonight at the UST Museum of Arts and Sciences. It will also be mounted at the Cultural Center of the Philippines next month, and in Japan and South Korea later.

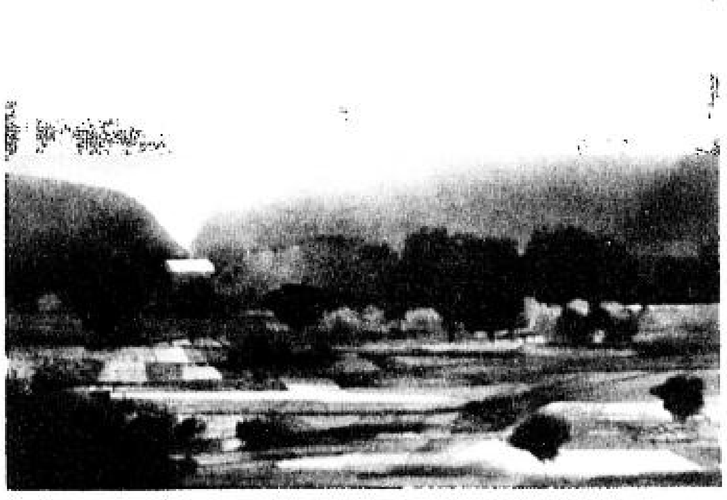
Lao at Avellana, Stevesantos at West, F. Sionil Jose at Lopez

VISUAL ARTS

THE AVELLANA Gallery (A-19, 2680 F.B. Harrison St., between Edsa Extension and Libertad St. opposite Gideon Academy, Pasay City), will open today a new corner for the display of small art works. The inaugural exhibit, "Clouds Thinking," by top abstractionist Lao Lian Ben, will have a unique breakfast opening at 9:30 a.m. Albert Avellana, gallery owner, said the opening is expected to perk things up at the start of the week and provide an occasion for shop talk among art lovers. Meanwhile, Ivi Avellana Cosio's "Ginton," a show of mixed-media paintings inspired by the T'boli god of metal work, has been extended at the main gallery. Call 8338357, 8328365.

WEST Gallery (Megamall) presents Stevesantos' "Landscapes" on Jan. 13-25 . The exhibit features a collection of the artist's latest works in Japanese ink on paper. Devoid of color, the works focus on mood and perspective. Call 6341284.

"MIGI'S Corner," an art exhibit by the Sining, Kulay at Tinta (Sikat) artists group of Antipolo is ongoing until Jan. 18 at the Galery-SSS Collection of Arts and Antiques, 2/F SSS Bldg. East Avenue., Diliman, QC. This is for the benefit of Migi's Corner Foundation which is currently raising funds for the rehabilitation of PGH Pediatric Ward 9. Guests are Remy Boquiren, Rafael Pacheco and Fernando Sena.



"LANDSCAPE II 2005" by Steve Santos

FERNANDO Sena will hold a workshop on drawing and painting starting Jan. 11 at the following venues: Tuesday, 5-7 p.m., 22 Guevarra cor. Zamora Sts., Area IV, Bgy. Paltok, SFDM, QC; Wednesday, 9-11:30 a.m., UP Vargas, Diliman, QC; Thursday, 9-11:30 a.m., Triumph Bldg., Quezon Avenue; Saturday and Sunday (once a week), 9-11:30 a.m., Philippine Medical Women's Association Bldg., V. Luna Rd. cor. Malakas St., QC. Call 3762196.

TREK Valdizno and Sandra Palomar will hold an artist's forum on Jan. 15, 3 p.m., as their ongoing show wraps up at Mag:net Gallery Paseo (Paseo de Roxas and Sedeño St., Makati). A presentation of soundworks by Rubber Ink (an American artist living in Manila) and Makoto Yoshihara (a Paris-based Japanese artist) will accompany the talk along with video and photo documents of visual art performances by Palomar. Their-Show ends Jan. 17. Call 8177895.

THE LOPEZ Memorial Museum will hold an art lecture series. National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose will give a talk on "Manila in Literature." The Museum is at the ground floor, Benpres Building, corner Exchange Road and Meralco Avenue, Pasig. Call 6312417.

Memo to RP movies: Back to basics, please

From page C1

Here he shares culpability with writer Ricky Lee, who, on the basis of a howler of a scene here, must be asked whether his overriding bent for hortatory didacticism and gender politics are getting the better of his basic storytelling skills.

The scene in question shows Ichiru, the Japanese captain (Manalo again), revealing to Inya (Dennis Trillo), a young gay man conscripted by the guerrillas to cross-dress and play Mata Hari to the Japs, that he knew all along Inya was a man. Yes, the captain likes boys more than girls, but so what?

"We're just ourselves," he grunts, while cradling his startled inamorata. "No race, no color, no gender. We're equal."

Was Lee perhaps writing with a 21st-century latte-swilling, Malate-going, South Beach Dieting urban gay—excuse us, metrosexual—in mind? Or is it too much to expect that a "historical" character speak with more fidelity to its context and culture, to what is more probable and natural for him to say under the circumstances?

Sloganeering like this smacks of naked condescension disguised as enlightened movie dialogue. It's a cheap sop to bleeding-heart modern audiences who are then expected to feel ennobled and gratified by the grand display of "love against all odds" unfolding onscreen. (In fact, moviegoers tittered loudly at this scene.)

We're just talking of the dialogue here. Forget about Judy Ann .Santos' character, who morphs from miserable wife to vengeful guerrilla commander faster than you can say "Banzai!" Or the fact that the endless encounters between the guerrillas and the Japs seem to take place in only one location. Or that the town of San Nicolas practically liberates itself from the Japs way before Liberation time—only for the battered Inya to die in the arms of "Kumander Berto" (that's Judy Ann Santos to you) right in the heart of the town plaza.

One cliche after another, and every one of them finding favor in Lee and Lamangan's bizarre take on a circa-1940s "M. Butterfly." Here, ideology trumps believability any time.

Sonic-boom screeching

It seems pointless to talk about Lamangan's third entry, "So Happy Together"—billed as a gay comedy—when talking about plausibility and the movies' chief obligation to the notion of "suspension of disbelief."

It's a comedy, you say, so give it leeway. Well, try sitting through two hours of Kris Aquino's sonic-boom screeching to see if you feel bouyant afterwards.

More to the point, in this movie, Aquino and Eric Quizon play best friends from their 20s to old age. Yet while Quizon visibly ages, even appearing bald, paunchy and sick in the end, Aquino remains young-looking and vibrant throughout. How sweet.

Similar eye-crossing befuddlement is in store for anyone watching Yam Laranas' horror film, "Sigaw." The visuals are great, and to be fair, the director knows how to create a clammy, sickly sense of atmosphere out of a good location (in this case, the hollows of an impressively decrepit building.)

But we have to ask: What is an ostensibly sensible yuppie like Richard Gutierrez doing in a building like that?

Nothing in the structure suggests charm, history or gentrified appeal. Does anyone with Gutierrez's apparent resources move into a condo without first checking thoroughly if he's buying a lemon? Was realism ever considered when this story was pitched?

Grace note

This is where Cesar Montano's first directorial feature, "Panaghoy sa Suba," becomes something of a grace note in the festival.

There are quite a few nits to pick in this independent Visayan movie, not least its crude technical values and meandering storyline. Moviegoers accustomed to faster pacing will find "Panaghoy" a bore, given to long, loving shots of sunsets and rivers and greenery.

But in everything else, it is a welcome, refreshing work. Blending neorealism and ethnography, Montano and his mostly non-professional cast have created a movie whose every frame is suffused with affection for a bygone place and way of life.

"Panaghoy's" evocation of a rustic riverine life, with all its quotidian rituals and obligations, feels unforced and authentic. That plain-spoken humanism finds luminous expression in Rebecca Lusterio, a newcomer who can put to shame all our so-called actors with her artless performance.

That a film steeped in more old-fashioned ways of moviemaking comes closest to evoking the textures and emotions of real life is "Panaghoy's" most telling statement. Mainstream Pinoy cinema can learn a thing or two from it.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

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REP regulars perform a song during the presscon for "Oh Romeo," among them Cocoy Laurel, Menchu Lauchengco Yulo, Rem Zamora, Joel Trinidad and Miguel Faustmann.

Oh, Shakespeare!

Repertory Philippines' first offering for 2005 is a farcical take on 'Romeo and Juliet'

By E.G. Porciuncula
Photos by Rudy Esperas

REPERTORY Philippines is shaking up Shakespeare in its first offering for 2005, "Oh Romeo," a farce with music by Ephraim Kishon.

The play has Joy Virata as director and an all-star cast: Pinky Amador, Michael Williams and Miguel Faustmann.

"It's a great combination of high literature and low comedy," says Virata, "a mix of the author's dialogue in modern language and lingo, and lines in the Shakespearean style."

PINKY Amador and Michael Williams

The proof of the spoof is this premise: What happens if Shakespeare's Romeo (Williams) and Juliet (Amador) didn't die, but instead lived through a modern-day type of marriage with all its ups and downs? Shakespeare (Faustmann) himself will help solve this riotous riddle.

JOY Virata

"It's an absolutely fun play! You can learn about Shakespeare or get to know him again, and enjoy as we make fun of him," says Virata. "The irreverence, the quotations, the whole atmosphere, the dialogue make the play tremendously funny. If you know Shakespeare, it's funnier, of course, but the comically exaggerated, modern husband-and-wife relationship (shoved in a 16th-century situation) by itself makes it great entertainment."

"Farce is a difficult type of theatre, treading the line between truth and untruth," adds Virata. "It's exaggeration but it must make the audience believe that what is happening is true. This is what makes farce so truly, so insanely funny. It is not the slapstick or sitcom kind of funny. It's easy to cross the line to overacting or going over the top, so we're very careful."

Elite talents

For this farce, Rep has called on elite acting talent and experience.

"My actors are excellent and all of them are at the top of their class," says Virata. "Michael and Miguel are very at home with farce. Pinky has the hardest role (three of them: Juliet, her daughter Lucrezia, and the nurse), demanding constant comic shifts in voice, characterization and physicality."

The lines are very difficult, she explains, but the whole point is to keep to the spirit of fun, be very quick in pace, and not allow the audience to think too much. The actors must be completely relaxed to be able to draw the audience into the fun.

To complement its jocular nature, the play also features comical songs with accompanying dances. "There were songs dictated by the script but some that we put in ourselves. Watch out for signature tunes from artists ranging from the Bee Gees to Tosca, from Janis Joplin to Lloyd Webber," says the director.

Dance maestro and resident Rep choreographer Jaime del Prado provided the steps.

Virata says her intention is to create an authentic 16th-century atmosphere but with a modern attitude. She's aiming for a more physical play, so it's more understandable. The goal is to make sure all the jokes come out clearly.

"Oh Romeo" runs Jan 14-30 at Rep's Globe Theater at Onstage, Greenbelt 1 Mall, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City. Call 8870710.

BABY Barredo with Marijko Amador

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'Crossing Borders'

Concert in HK for tsunami victims starred well-loved singers from the region, many of whom had not publicly performed in years

HONG KONG—Some of Asia's biggest stars, including kung fu hero Jet Li and singer Andy Lau, dazzled fans in a marathon Hong Kong concert on Friday to raise funds for survivors of the deadliest tsunami on record.

Fans streamed into the Hong Kong Football Stadium throughout the seven-hour "Crossing Borders" charity show, which featured well-loved singers from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, many of whom had not publicly performed in years.

People turned up after work and more than 10,000 stayed until the show ended at about 11 p.m. (1500 GMT), clapping and swaying as they held luminous sticks high in the air.

The show was the first major event to be held by the local celebrity world in response to the Dec. 26 catastrophe. Another is planned for Cardiff in Wales and British singer Sting will hold a special concert in Australia.

A string of famous actors, directors and sporting personalities earlier made large individual donations.

Top regional stars like H ong Kong's Andy Lau, Jackie Cheung, Frances Yip, Taiwan's Chang Hui-mei, Coco Lee, Zhang Xiao-yan, and China's Sun Nan packed the stage where they gave a rendition of the signature song "Love." "Love" is the Chinese version of "We Are The World," the song that Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie wrote in 1985 to raise money for famine-struck Africa.

Tickets to the show were free and it was beamed live to 40 television stations and web sites across the world.

Brush with disaster

China's top action movie star, Jet Li, who was in the Maldives with his family during the disaster, made a surprise appearance and spoke of his brush with the Dec. 26 tsunami.

"The waters were swirling and rose so fast. After I ran three steps, they were up to my neck and I was carrying my little daughter and holding my aunt ... we fought on," Li said.

"Today we stand here, we are here to give. After such a life and death experience, I want to do more," Li said, adding that he was about to hand over checks totaling more than HK$1 million (or $128,000—$1 is HK$7.8) on behalf of his family and friends.

The stars urged fans to fill up more than 120 donation boxes dotting the stadium while television viewers were encouraged to call hotlines to donate. Company representatives took turns to walk onstage to hand over giant checks.

Serena surprise

Tennis star Serena Williams, who is in Hong Kong for a tournament, surprised fans when she walked onstage.

"I'm pledging HK$80,000 to the tsunami victims," said Williams, adding that she would also set aside part of her takings from Hong Kong to the cause.

By the end of the show, donors who called into the event's hotlines and handed over checks onstage had pledged over HK$30 million ($3.8 million).

The show is the latest in a string of private sector efforts in Hong Kong to raise funds for survivors of the tsunami, which killed over 150,000 people.

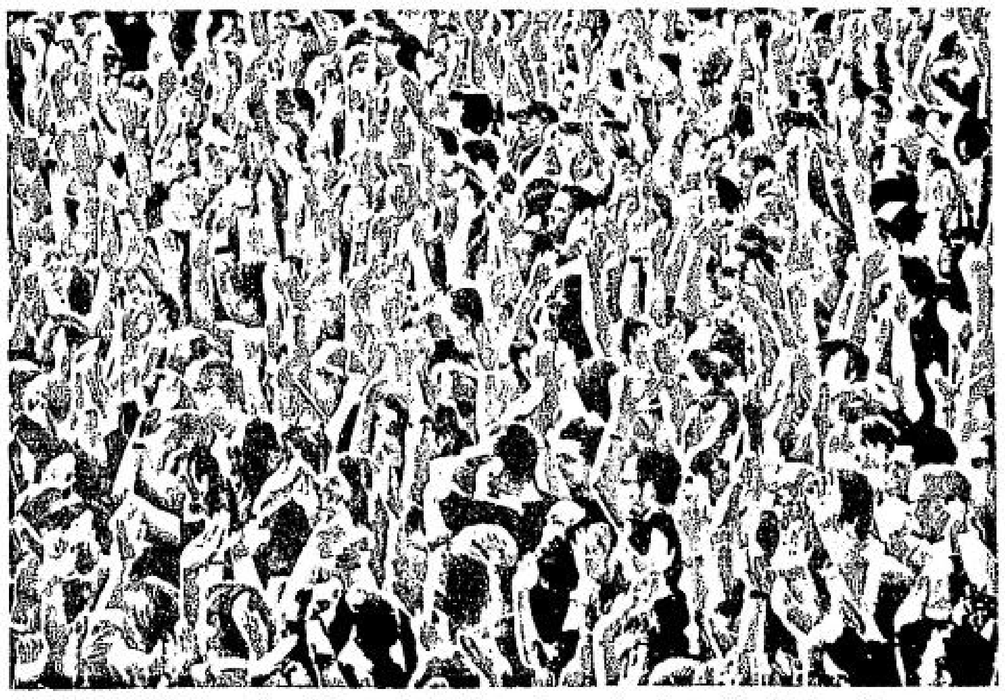
The catastrophe has left no one untouched and ordinary people from across the territory have dug deep.

More than 760 prisoners in the high-security Stanley Prison, where some of the city's most hardened criminals are locked up, donated HK$141,788 ($18,178) on Thursday.

Hong Kong's government, criticized for acting too slowly after the tsunami, has pledged HK$17 million, while private donations have surpassed HK$530 million so far.

Reuters

A THAI transvestite dances in a go-go bar in Patong Beach on Phuket island Friday night. Business is bad.



"AUSTRALIA Unites—Reach Out to Asia," Saturday, on the steps of the Sydney Opera

HK POP star William So (left) and China's Tian Zhen in Beijing Workers' Stadium on Thursday.

HEAVYWEIGHT cast during Friday's event. Artists from HK, China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia performed.

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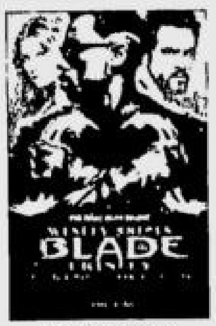
NOW SHOWING

OPENS THIS WEEK



BLADE TRINITY
MTRCB RATING: R13

For years, Blade has fought against the vampires in the cover of night, with the world above unaware of the brutal ongoing war. But now, after falling into the crosshairs of the FBI, he is forced out into the daylight where he is driven to join forces with a clan of human vampire hunters he never knew existed - The Nightstalkers. Together with Abigail (Jessica Biel) and Hannibal (Ryan Reynolds), two deftly trained Nightstalkers, Blade follows a trail of blood to an ancient creature that is hunting him.. the original vampire, Dracula.

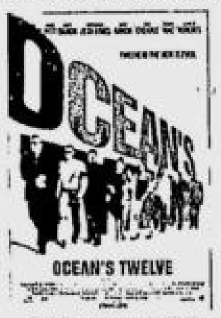
Now Showing at:
SM Megamall • Fairview • North Edsa • Manila • Sta. Mesa • Southmall Tutuban • Bicutan • Sucat

STEPHEN CHOW
功夫
KUNG FU HUSTLE

KUNG FU HUSTLE
MTRCB RATING: PG13

A hapless wanna be gangster, Sing, must overcome his inability to wield a knife and demonstrate his mettle in order to become a member of the notorious Axe Gang. After several encounters with thugs and a fearsome adversary known as the Beast, Sing overcomes his inadequacy and realizes he is the greatest kung fu master of them all, destined to protect the sacred street.

Now Showing at:
SM Megamall • Fairview North Edsa Manila • Sta. Mesa Southmall • Tutuban • Bicutan Sucat



OCEAN'S TWELVE
MTRCB RATING: PG13

Daniel Ocean recruits one more team member so he can pull off three major European heists in this sequel to Ocean's 11. It's three years later and Terry Benedict wants his money back. While Ocean and his team are spread out all over the U.S., Benedict tracks down every single one of them. Now, Ocean's Eleven is back together and they need to pay Benedict back PLUS interest within two weeks. The team travels to Amsterdam to start a new heist.

Now Showing at:
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NOW SHOWING

—THE—
PODIUM
CINEMA

For Seat Reservation, call 633 8976
LATE NIGHT SCREENING
DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE

METRO MANILA

sm megamall

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 SIGAW
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE
5 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
6 AISHITE IMASU 1941
7 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
8 MANO PO 3
9 ENTENG KABISOTE
10 BLADE TRINITY
11 LASTIKMAN
12 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

sm city fairview

1 LASTIKMAN
2 SIGAW
3 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
4 BLADE TRINITY
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 BLADE TRINITY
8 KUNG FU HUSTLE
9 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
10 AISHITE IMASU 1941
11 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
12 MANO PO 3

sm city manila

1 BLADE TRINITY
2 OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
6 BLADE TRINITY
7 AISHITE IMASU 1941
8 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
9 ENTENG KABISOTE
10 SIGAW
11 LASTIKMAN
12 MANO PO 3

sm city sta. mesa

1 BLADE TRINITY
2 MANO PO 3
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
5 OCEAN'S TWELVE
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
7 LASTIKMAN
8 SIGAW
9 ENTENG KABISOTE
10 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city southmall

1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 SIGAW
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
6 AISHITE IMASU 1941
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
8 OCEAN'S TWELVE
9 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
10 MANO PO 3

sm city north edsa

1 SIGAW
2 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 MANO PO 3
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 BLADE TRINITY
8 KUNG FU HUSTLE

sm cinema tutuban

1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE

sm supercenter sucat

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city bicutan

1 BLADE TRINITY
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 OCEAN'S TWELVE

Movies are subject to change without prior notice • For complete movie schedule, visit [illegible]

CALL!
DIAL 833-9999 FOR INFORMATION AND MOVIE LISTINGS, MTRCB RATINGS AND SCREENING SCHEDULES.

SURF!
VISIT US AT www.smcinema.com FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA.

Red Carpet
PREMIERE

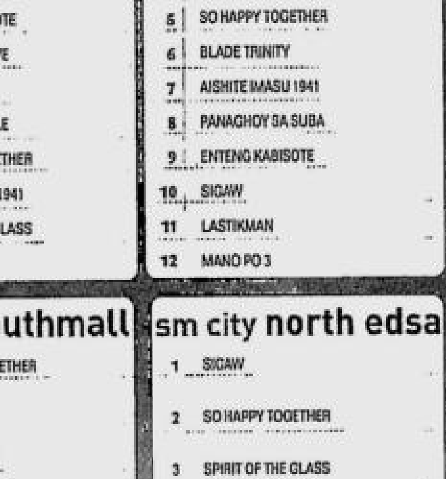
January 17
SM MEGAMALL
Cinema 1 • 7:30pm
MTRCB Rating PG13

Tune in to 90.7 LOVE RADIO for a chance to win free invites!

BRING the whole family!

First 3 couples who could bring their in-laws on January 17 will win free tickets to the Red Carpet Premiere of **Meet The Fockers**. Just bring your marriage contract and a valid ID

Solar Entertainment Corporation



Meet the Fockers
Misery loves family

REGULAR SHOWING STARTS JANUARY 19

JESSICA BIEL star of BLADE: TRINITY
From "Seventh Heaven" to topless pictorial

HOLLYWOOD—"I was completely taken advantage of ... that is the truth," laments sexy actress Jessica Biel , the star of BLADE TRINITY

It seems the 22-year-old, voted by People Magazine as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in 1999, still can't shake off the repercussions of a topless pictorial she did for Gear magazine's March 2000 issue.

She reveals that it "embarrassed my entire family and me. It just got totally blown out of proportion."

When she posed for those photographs wearing only undies and a pair of high-heeled shoes, she says, she was just a young girl following the photographer's instructions.

"So I was going like, 'Okay, Mr. Photographer, if that's what you say you need, I'll do that.' But when I saw the finished product, I was shocked. To think that I just wanted to change my image and show a different side of myself other than what people saw in 'Seventh Heaven.'"

In her new role "**Blade: Trinity**" role, Biel plays Abigail, one of two deftly trained Nightstalkers, or human vampire hunters.

"I love the role because it is very physical," she gushes. "At the same time, it allows me to be feminine and sexy." •

ADVT

Rape rap for soul singer

LOS ANGELES—Soul singer James Brown has been sued by a former employee who claims the performer raped her 16 years ago.

Jacque Hollander, a former public relations assistant to the 71-year-old "Godfather of Soul," filed a civil lawsuit on Wednesday in Illinois. She is seeking more than $100 million in damages.

In the suit, Hollander says the attack occurred in the back of Brown's van off a South Carolina highway in April 1988.

Hollander claims the singer pointed a shotgun at her and demanded she undress. She says Brown then raped, battered her and slammed her head on the car wall.

Brown underwent surgery for prostate cancer last month. His manager, Super-Frank Copsidas, said in a statement: "This is just absurd and does not warrant any comment."

Just compensation

Hollander, 48, is not pressing criminal charges against Brown, but is seeking compensatory and punitive damages because she was recently diagnosed with the neurological disorder Graves' Disease which she claims was caused by her "rape and torture" at the hands of the singer.

Brown has had several run-ins with the law over the years for domestic violence, drug charges and weapons possession. He spent nearly three years in prison after a 1988 arrest for leading police on a car chase between South Carolina and Georgia.

A spokesperson for Hollander said on Thursday she had attempted to file criminal charges against Brown years ago, but the case did not proceed for various reasons.

"He was so popular in those days and she was very fearful. She has only recently gathered the strength to do this," spokesperson Paul Leech said.

Brown, a member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame who has made more than 50 albums, left the hospital in December after what was described as successful prostate cancer surgery and is expected to make a full recovery. Reuters

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MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
Telephone: 633.2227 / 633.7851 loc. 171

PREMIERE THEATRE

(DOLBY)	MANO PO 3	GP
1 (DOLBY)	OCEAN'S TWELVE	PG13
2 (DOLBY)	KUNG FU HUSTLE	PG13
3 (DOLBY)	BLADE TRINITY	R13
4 (DOLBY)	OCEAN'S TWELVE	PG13

isetann SUPER CINERAMA
CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO
tel 733.4238

1. (DOLBY)	BAD SIGAW
2.	AISHITE IMASU 1941
3.	HAPPY TOGETHER
4.	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5.	ENTENG KABISOTE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4 (SDDS)	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
7 (DTS)	RESERVE
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	AISHITE IMASU 1941
2	ENTENG KABISOTE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	AFTER THE SUNSET
2	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3	SAMBAHIN ANG PURI MO
4 (DTS)	PANAGHOY SA SUBA

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDD)	BLADE TRINITY
2 (SDDS)	KUNG FU HUSTLF
3 (DTS)	OCEAN'S TWELVE
4 GOLD (DTS)	OCEAN'S TWELVE
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	ENTENG KABISOTE
6 GOLD (SDDS)	KUNG FU HUSTLE
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	HAPPY TOGETHER
8 (RDAL)	SIGAW
9 (RDAL)	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
10 (RDAL)	MANO PO-3

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	KUNG FU HUSTLE
2	BLADE TRINITY
3	ENTENG KABISOTE

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	SIGAW
3	MANO PO -3
4	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007

1	AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS
2	SIGAW

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	BLADE III
2 (DOLBY)	OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 (DOLBY)	KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (DOLBY)	OCEAN'S TWELVE

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
MALL CINEPLEX
Tel 911-3101 loc. 8242 / 8281 / 8397

1 (Dolby)	OCEAN'S TWELVF
2 (SDDS)	BLADE TRINIT
3 (DTS)	KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (Dolby)	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5 (Dolby)	ENTENG KABISOTE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	BLADE TRINITY
5	OCEAN'S TWELVE

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	HAPPY TOGETHER
2	NAGDADALAGA
3	KUNG FU HUSTLE
4	ENTENG KABISOTE
5 (DOLBY)	BLADE TRINITY
6	OCEAN'S TWELVE

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOW TIME

Manila's Festival of Twins

CALLING all twins... and triplets, quadruplets, quintets.

If you and your siblings love the limelight and are not camera shy, if you believe you've got talent, you can join the talent contest during the Festival of Twins next month.

Hosted by the City of Manila and the Association of Twins and Multiple Births, the festival aims to bring together these special siblings from all over the country for a day of fun, games and entertainment.

Auditions for the talent search will be held on Jan. 15, 2 p.m., at the Good Shepherd Compound, 1043 Aurora Blvd., Quezon City.

Come prepared with a demo tape, or call tel. 913-6441 for details.

The Festival of Twins is made possible by Mayor Lito Atienza, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Happy Feet and Hallmark.

Furor over Jerry Springer musical

LONDON—Christian protesters set fire to their television licenses outside the BBC's London offices on Friday as outrage spread over the public broadcaster's decision to air a profanity-laden musical.

In the award-winning London show "Jerry Springer—The Opera," viewers can watch a diaper fetishist confess all to his true love, catch a tap dance routine by the Ku Klux Klan and see Jesus and the Devil locked in a swearing match.

Michael Reid, a pastor and self-styled bishop who organized the peaceful demonstration ahead of the airing on Saturday evening, called the musical "filth."

"The use of foul language together with mocking Jesus Christ and portraying him wearing a nappy with sequins is highly offensive to Christians and we felt that it was totally wrong," he told Reuters.

Breaker

He said the British Broadcasting Corporation, which is funded by license fees from the public, would not risk upsetting minority faiths in Britain like Islam or Buddhism.

"Because we are Christians, they think we are fair game for insults," he added after dozens of people burned licenses.

The spat, which has made front page news in the British tabloid press, comes less than a month after hundreds of angry Sikh protesters stormed a theater in Birmingham and forced it to scrap a play depicting sexual abuse in a Sikh temple.

US actor David Soul, who stars in the show, went on air to defend the BBC's decision, which has prompted over 30,000 complaints from the public even before it has been shown.

"Believe me, this show would never have gotten to where it is today if it was simply about blasphemy and bad language," Soul told BBC radio.

"I'm a Christian and I certainly don't see it as blasphemy at all," said Soul, famous for his role in the "Starsky and Hutch" police series.

The musical, written by British composer Richard Thomas and comedian Stewart Lee, is based on Springer's brash American talk show whose lurid topics ranged from "Honey I'm a Call Girl" to "Bring on the Bisexuals."

Unprecedented complaints

Religious leaders fear the hundreds of swear words the Springer show contains would cause offense when broadcast.

Ofcom, the independent regulator of television and radio in Britain, said it had received 7,000 complaints so far.

The next highest total was in 1995, when 1,600 people contacted Ofcom's predecessor to complain about the airing of the controversial movie "The Last Temptation of Christ."

"The level of protest is unprecedented," John Beyer, director of viewers' lobby group Mediawatch, told Reuters.

"An awful lot of people who pay their license fee wonder if this should be put on." British viewers pay around 120 pounds ($225) a year for their color television licenses.

Breaker

A BBC spokeswoman said the corporation had no plans to take the show off air, despite receiving around 30,000 e-mails, calls and letters, the vast majority of which were critical.

"People say to us 'why can't you treat us like adults, it's our choice, why don't you let us choose what we see and hear?'" said BBC director general Mark Thompson.

"We get attacked from both sides on this. The key thing for us is our commitment to the watershed, which is a commitment that programmes shown before nine o'clock will be suitable for children to watch in a family context," he told the BBC. *Reuters*

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13 1:20,3:50,6:20,8:50	OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13 11:40,2:10,4:40,7:10,9:40	BLADE 3: TRINITY R13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:20
KUNG FU HUSTLE PG13 1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:05	SO HAPPY TOGETHER PG13 12:40,5:20,10:00 MANO PO 3 GP 3:00 7:40	OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00,10:30

star group of cinemas movie guide IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA-SHAW
Tel. No. 726.61.50
3 Kung Fu Hustle
4 Blade 3
5 Oceans 12

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 850.42.85
1 Happy Together
2 Nagdadalaga
3 Kung Fu Hustle
4 Enteng Kabisote
5 Blade 3
6 Oceans 12

starmall LAS PIÑAS
Tel. No. 873.50.04
1 Around the World in 80 days
2 Sigaw

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E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
For inquiries, call: 687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	BLADE III 10:40, 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00 R-13
2	OCEAN'S 12 11:10, 2:05, 5:05 8:05, 11:05 PG-13
3	KUNG FU HUSTLE 11:00, 1:25, 3:50 6:15, 8:40, 11:00 PG-13
4	OCEAN'S 12 11:15, 2:40, 5:25 8:10, 10:50 PG-13

Araneta Center
LEISURE GUIDE

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OCEAN'S TWELVE
12:45 1:15 3:35 4:05 6:25 6:55 9:15 9:45
BLADE : TRINITY
12:05 12:35 2:25 2:55 4:45 5:15 7:05 7:35 9:25
KUNG FU HUSTLE
12:50 1:20 3:00 3:30 5:10 5:40 7:20 7:50 9:30
ENTENG KABISOTE
1:40 4:10 6:40 9:10
SO HAPPY TOGETHER
12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:05
MANO PO 3
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

ALI MALL CINEMAS

1	Dolby	OCEAN'S TWELVE 12:00 2:50 5:40 8:30
2	SDDS	BLADE: TRINITY 11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
3	dts	KUNG FU HUSTLE 11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40
4	Dolby	SO HAPPY TOGETHER 11:20 1:30 3:40 5:50 8:00
5	Dolby	ENTENG KABISOTE 12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00

ARANETA COLISEUM

Jan. 12	PBA
Jan. 14	
Jan. 16	ALL FILIPINO CUP
Jan. 19	BASKETBALL GAMES
Jan. 29	Martin Nievera & Patti Austin Concert

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Sunday & Holiday 2 PM to 10 PM

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CINEMA 1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
10:45, 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:50
PG13

CINEMA 2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
PG13

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① OCEAN'S TWELVE
FS 1PM, 4PM, 7PM
LMF 10:00PM (PG-13)

② KUNG FU HUSTLE
FS 12:20PM, 2:45PM, 5:10PM, 7:35PM, LMF 10:00PM (PG-13)

③ BLADE TRINITY
FS 12PM, 2:30PM, 5PM, 7:30PM
LMF 10:00PM (R-13)

④ OCEAN'S TWELVE
FS 12:30PM, 3:30PM, 6:30PM
LMF 9:30PM (PG-13)

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• METRO MANILA CINEMAS •

GALLERIA 632-9115/16

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE • THX
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
2 BLADE TRINITY
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
11:10 1:45 4:20 6:55 9:30
7 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00
8 MANO PO 3
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
9 SIGAW
11:40 2:10 4:40 7:10 9:40
10 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
11:40 1:55 4:10 6:25 9:40

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE 11:10 1:50 4:30 7:10 9:50
2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:15 10:00
3 BLADE TRINITY
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 SIGAW
10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
11:15 1:50 4:25 7:00 9:40
6 RESERVE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10:30 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45

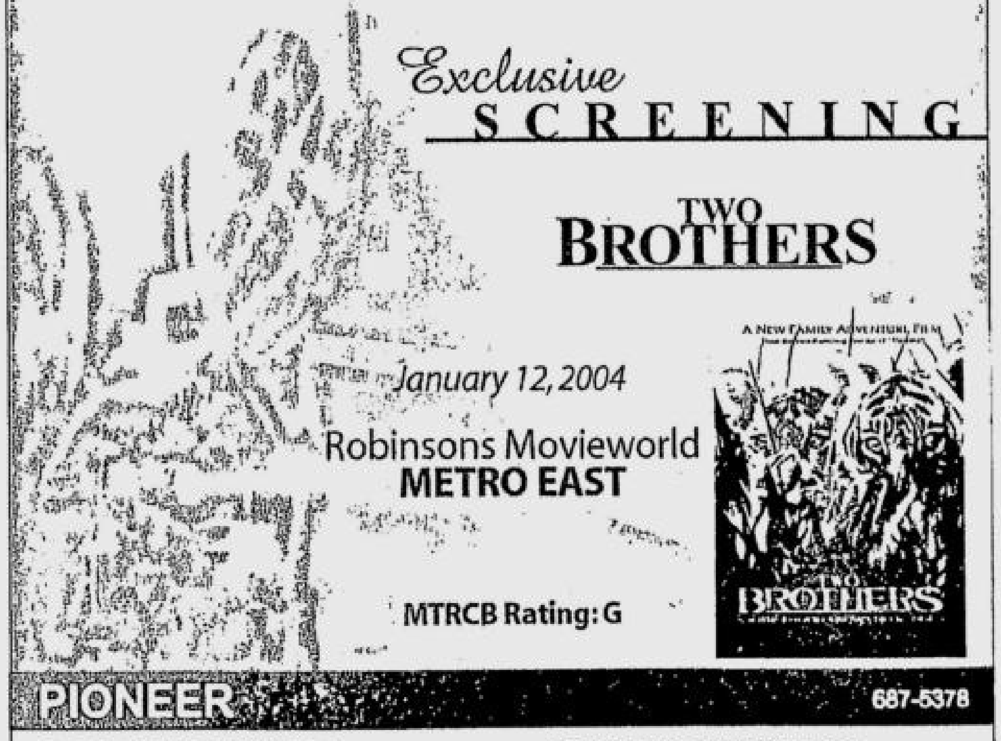
METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 MANO PO 3
11:00 1:05 3:10 5:15 7:20 9:30
2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
12:05 2:15 4:25 6:40 9:00
3 SIGAW
11:00 1:05 3:10 5:15 7:20 9:30
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
12:30 3:00 5:30 8:00 10:30
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
12:05 2:45 5:25 8:05 10:30
7 BLADE TRINITY
11:50 2:30 5:10 7:50 10:30
8 ENTENG KABISOTE
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:30 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25
2 MANO PO 3
11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
10:40 1:05 3:30 5:55 8:25
4 SIGAW
11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55
6 BLADE TRINITY
10:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
10:15 12:45 3:15 5:45 8:25
8 AISHITE IMASU
11:00 1:00 3:00

CHECK THIS OUT ►►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TWO BROTHERS

Exclusive SCREENING
TWO BROTHERS
January 12, 2004
Robinsons Movieworld
METRO EAST
MTRCB Rating: G

PIONEER 687-5378

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
10:40 1:20 4:00 6:40 9:00
2 BLADE TRINITY
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:30 8:50
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
10:25 1:00 3:35 6:10 8:45
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
11:30 1:50 4:10 6:30 8:50

Citisquare MALABON 288-0985 / 2575

1 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
11:30 1:45 4:00 6:15 8:30
2 MANO PO 3
10:30 12:30 2:30 4:30 6:30 8:30
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
10:30 1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30
4 SIGAW
11:10 1:30 3:50 6:10 8:30

CAINTA 240-4661

1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
12:20 3:00 5:40 8:20
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
11:00 1:20 3:40 6:00 8:20
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
10:55 1:25 3:55 6:25 8:55
4 BLADE TRINITY
10:35 1:10 3:45 6:20 8:55

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'Kung Fu Hustle' star Stephen Chow draws inspiration from memories of his idol, Bruce Lee. The very first time he saw the master on film, Chow recalls, 'he became everything to me'

STEPHEN CHOW had no formal training in martial arts, but this has worked to his advantage.

Never too late to be a hero

NOW SHOWING

"IT'S TOO late for me to become a real kung fu master, but at least I can be a kung fu expert in a movie—this much I can do," says Asian superstar Stephen Chow.

Chow, who rose to fame via the international hit "Shaolin Soccer," pays homage to his childhood idol Bruce Lee in his latest starrer, "Kung Fu Hustle," Columbia Pictures' special-effects-packed action-comedy.

Now in his early 40s, Chow is shy and decidedly low-key off camera. But his eyes sparkle whenever Bruce Lee's name is mentioned. As a boy growing up in modest circumstances in Hong Kong during the 1970s, Chow found escape and joy going to the movies and watching Bruce Lee's martial arts classics. How he yearned to duplicate the hero's amazing feats.

Chow's inspiration for "Kung Fu Hustle" was thus drawn from those movie-going days. Born to a poor family with three children, there wasn't much extra money for entertainment. But one day, Chow's mother took him to the movies, and his life changed forever.

Like yesterday

"I remember it as clearly as if it were yesterday," Chow recalls. "It was a Bruce Lee film. We were in a very run-down theater, but I didn't mind it at all. I was simply overwhelmed by the experience. I felt as if my heart was going to burst. I had tears in my eyes. Bruce Lee was so incredible, not only because of his martial arts expertise, but also because of his furious spirit. He just filled up the whole screen. He became everything to me."

In short, he decided he was going to be exactly like Bruce Lee.

"Being a martial arts expert was my first choice; being an actor, second—that's what Bruce Lee was," Chow says, laughing.

Nine-year-old Stephen Chow set off on his journey by finding himself a teacher. But his family couldn't afford the lessons, so the boy went practicing on his own, teaching himself various styles from different schools of martial arts.

Chow has very colorful recollections of those days. He could never forget the famous scene in "The Chinese Connection," in which Bruce Lee destroys a sign outside a park that said, "No Dogs or Chinamen Allowed." One day at school, to the delight of the other students, Chow kicked down a sign posted on a door.

A SCREEN sidekick, actor Xing Yu, demonstrates the trademark of Chow's movies, comedic kung fu.

Stunted growth

Without formal training, Chow's progress as a kung fu expert was stunted—but this turned out to be a blessing. Today, millions have come to love his comedic acting. He admits that the response he got as a young boy to his kung fu stunts made him want to be a performer.

The little boy who wants to be a powerful hero is at the heart of "Kung Fu Hustle." But there's a key moment in the film which Chow had in mind from the beginning. To pay respect to Bruce Lee, Chow wanted to take his shirt off in one scene and assume one of Bruce Lee's famous poses, showing off rippling back muscles. For weeks, besides regular training, Chow worked hard to build up the muscles on his back.

In the end, he says, he had to admit: "My back muscles still haven't developed to the point where I am totally happy with them, but I'm taking my shirt off anyway."

He didn't count on the weather. He recounts. "It was so cold on that day! Making films is always like this—on the coldest day, you are asked to take your clothes off; and on the hottest day, you are required to put on layers and layers of clothing!"

Asked if baring his back was a ploy to attract a bigger audience, Chow guffaws. "No, oh, no! I would never think of it that way!"

Creators of film cranes to receive special Oscars

LOS ANGELES—The creators of two camera crane systems that allow directors to film wide, sweeping action sequences without pushing a camera along static sets of tracks will be honored with Oscars for their achievements.

Horst Burbulla will be honored with an Oscar statue for the invention and development of the Technocrane telescoping camera crane when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences honors scientific and technical achievements on Feb. 12.

Burbulla's invention allows cameras to glide laterally across a scene and capture action where space constraints do not allow a camera mounted on a dolly to move along tracks on the ground.

Making things possible

The Technocrane holds the camera aloft and moves it on an arm that works much like a car antenna. Without it, complicated action scenes like those featured in the "Spider-Man" movies and last year's "Van Helsing" would not have been possible, said Richard Edlund, chair of the Academy's Science and Technology Council.

Also receiving an Oscar will be Jean-Marie Lavalou, Alain Masseron and David Samuelson for developing the Louma Camera Crane and a remote control system for operating the camera.

The system was first used to film the jitterbug sequence in Steven Spielberg's "1941." The crane and remote system allowed the camera to maneuver over and under dancers and get shots that an operator holding a camera otherwise could not achieve, Edlund said.

Both systems are widely used in films today.

Other people who have contributed to the technical aspects of the movie industry also will be honored by the Academy next month.

AP

THE TECHNOCRANE at work.